

Ancient Syracuse

From Foundation to Fourth Century Collapse



Richard Evans

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ANCIENT SYRACUSE

Syracuse possesses a unique place in the history of the ancient Mediterranean because of its contribution to Greek culture and political thought and practice. Even in the first century BC Cicero could still declare, 'You have often heard that of all the Greek cities Syracuse is the greatest and most beautiful.' Sicily's strategic location in the Mediterranean brought the city prosperity and power, placing it in the first rank of states in the ancient world. The history and governance of the city were recorded from the fifth century BC and the volume of literary sources comes close to matching the records of Athens or Rome. Combining literary and material evidence this monograph traces the history of Syracuse, offering new arguments about the date of the city's foundation, and continues through the fifth century when, as a democracy, Syracuse's military strength grew to equal that of Athens or Sparta, surpassing them in the early fourth century under the tyrant Dionysius I. From ca. 350 BC, however, the city's fortunes declined as the state was wracked with civil strife as the tyranny lost control. The result was a collapse so serious that the city faced complete and imminent destruction.

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Contents

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	vii
<i>List of Maps and Figures</i>	xiii
<i>Preface</i>	xv
1 The Myths and the Reality of the Foundation	1
2 The Deinomenid Tyranny (ca. 700–466 BC)	19
3 The Fifth Century Collapse (466–460 BC)	57
4 Democracy and Ducetius (460–427 BC)	79
5 The First Athenian Expedition (427–424 BC)	93
6 The Second Athenian Expedition (415–413 BC)	107
7 The Rise of the Tyrant Dionysius I	147
8 The Fourth Century Collapse	163
Epilogue	189
A Chronology of Syracuse	191
Appendices	
1 Literary Sources for the Earliest History of Syracuse	197
2 The Deinomenid Rulers in Fifth Century BC Literature	201
3 Ancient Literary Sources for the Deinomenid Tyranny	205
4 The Dating of the Damareteion Coinage	209
5 Extraordinary Trophies: Syracusan Exhibitionism after Victory over the Athenians	213
6 The Chief Sources for the Life and Death of Dion	219
<i>Bibliography</i>	223
<i>Index</i>	231

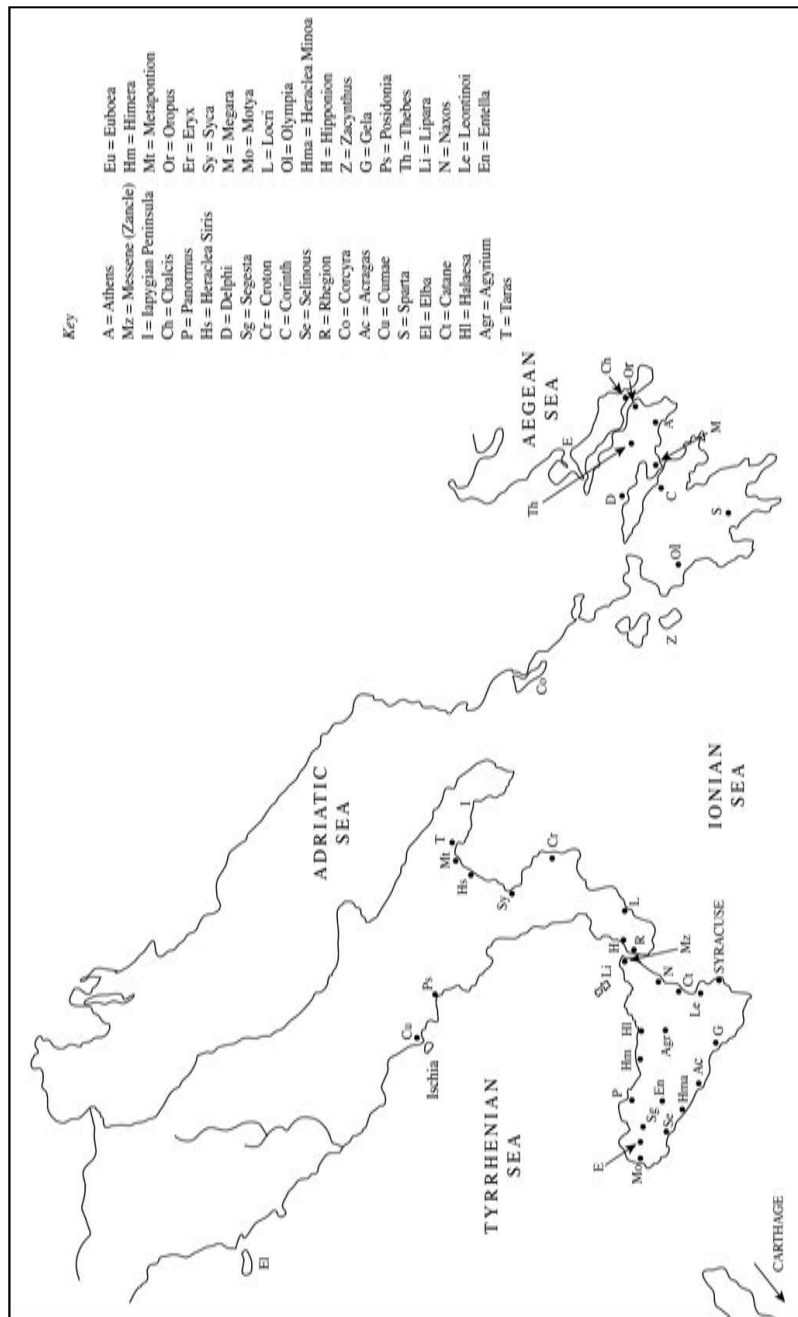
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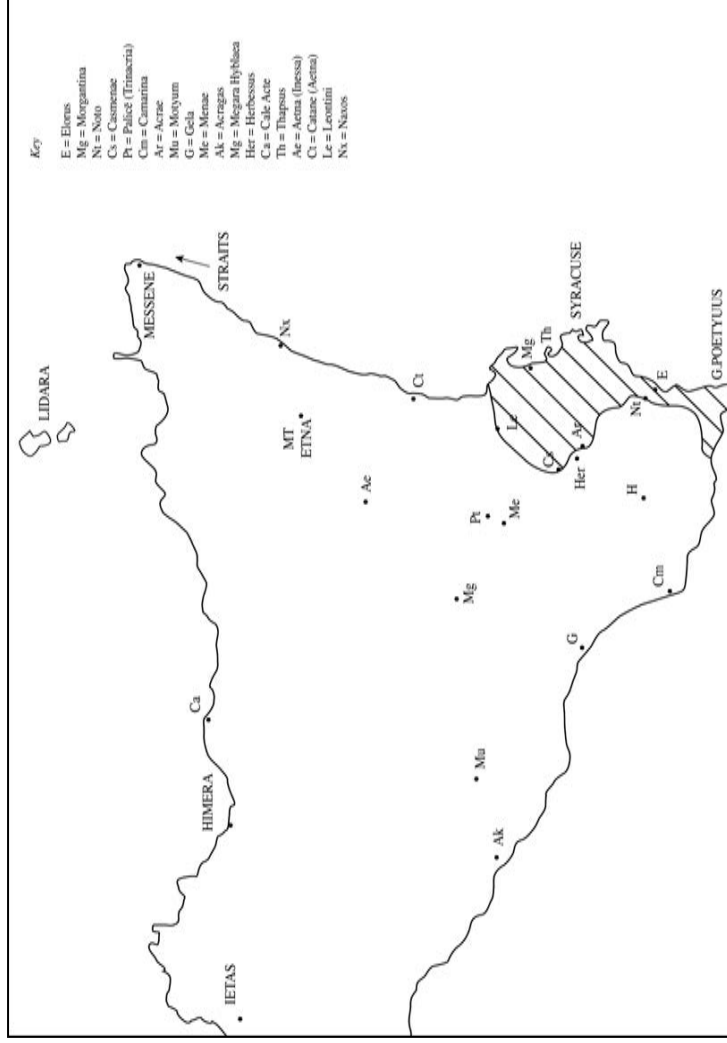
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Map 1 Greece, Magna Graecia and Sicily in the Classical Period

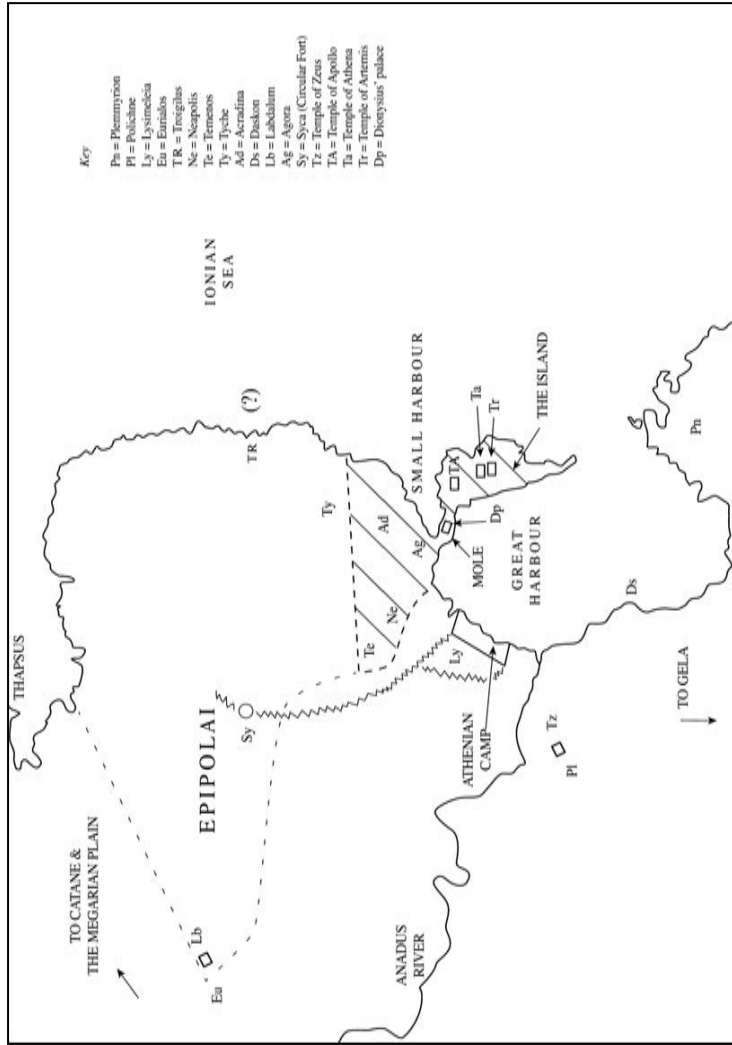
Map 2 Central and Eastern Sicily in the fifth and fourth centuries BC, showing the extent of Syracusan territory in this period

Note: The shaded area illustrates the actual extent of Syracusan territory. The relationship between the various urban communities within the territory of Syracuse remains unclear due to a lack of evidence. Acrae, Casmenae, Notum and Elorus must all have been self-governing, but somehow they were represented at Syracuse during the periods of democratic government. Presumably, during periods of tyranny, a sole ruler was installed. The smaller communities such as Polichne must also have had some link in the political hierarchy, but this too is not attested in the earlier history of Syracuse. It was only during the rule of Hieron II and provincial administration by Rome that clarification of legal positions occurred.



Map 3 The main topographical features in and around Syracuse (500–344 BC)

Note: The shaded area represents the city inside the fortifications in the fifth century, while the area inside the dots is the additional area fortified by Dionysius I after 405. The jagged lines represent the Athenian siege works of 414–413. The double wall within which Nicias collected his entire army and fleet and which may be found in Freeman's map (1892) facing 167, and which has often been reproduced, Smith (1923) for example, encloses much too small an area for so large a force, and especially fails to take account of the number of triremes and other ships for which room had to be made for beaching there. The length of beach required for the Athenian fleet must have extended for as much as 2 kilometres, see Evans (2009) 146–7; Evans (2013) 86 and 88.



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Maps and Figures

Maps

1	Greece, Magna Graecia and Sicily in the Classical Period	ix
2	Central and Eastern Sicily in the fifth and fourth centuries BC, showing the extent of Syracusan territory in this period	x
3	The main topographical features in and around Syracuse (500–344 BC)	xi

Figures

1.1	The temple of Apollo at Delphi visited by Myscellus and Archias before they sailed across the Ionian Sea (Strabo, 6.1.12, 6.2.4).	4
1.2	The temple of Apollo at Corinth with the Acrocorinth in the background. The Bacchiadae were expelled from the city at roughly the same time as the foundation of Syracuse.	15
2.1	The Island from Epipolai. Note the distinctive ‘kidney-shaped’ bay, which became the Great Harbour. See also Map 3.	39
2.2	The tomb of Theron, tyrant of Agragas, who died in 473/2 (Diod. 11.53.1), with the temple of Heracles in the background.	48
4.1	The Acropolis at Leontini. The citizens of Catane returned to their former homes in 460 (Diod. 11.76.3).	81
6.1	The unfinished temple at Segesta. ‘The Segestaeans reminded the Athenians about the alliance that they had made with the people of Leontini from the time of Laches and the last war’ (Thuc. 6.6.2).	111
6.2	Epipolai, the site of the sole night battle of the Peloponnesian War (Thuc. 7.44.1).	141
7.1	The temple of Apollo in the acropolis of Selinous. This central area was re-occupied by the Carthaginians after they had sacked the city in 409. Hermocrates also used this area as his base in 408.	148
7.2	The acropolis at Selinous. Hermocrates refortified this section of the ruined city in the summer of 408 (Diod. 13.63.3).	153
7.3	View of the theatre in the Neapolis quarter of Syracuse with the Island and the Great Harbour in the background. The <i>temenos</i>	

- of Apollo was adjacent to the theatre on the right and the linear theatre; the oldest theatre in the city was slightly below and also to the right of its more famous successor. The theatre was probably begun under Dionysius I in the first quarter of the fourth century. 157
- 8.1 Dion arrived at Heraclea Minoa on his return from exile (Plut. *Dion*, 25.11–14). 172
- 8.2 View from Heraclea Minoa. ‘Making good time, within five days they reached Minoa, a small place in that part of Sicily under the control of the Carthaginians’ (Plut. *Dion*, 25.11). 175
- 8.3 View over Syracuse, the Island and the Great Harbour from the Eurialos end of the Epipolai plateau. Nicias will have viewed the city from this place when the Athenian troops occupied Epipolai in April or May 414. 186

All photographs taken by the author.

Preface

Syracuse was one of the most important cities and city-states of the ancient Mediterranean world. Although some may consider that Syracuse occupies a rank somewhat lower in significance than Athens, Sparta, Rome and even Alexandria, arguably in political, military, constitutional and cultural developments its contribution stands in the front line. Its geographical location at the hub of the Mediterranean, dominating both the eastern and western seas, was the key to the wealth and power of Syracuse and made the city a formidable adversary, as its enemies discovered. The natural advantages and strengths of its site also meant that Syracuse became an attractive and safe haven second to none both for its own citizens and for the many traders who utilised its harbours and who brought immense prosperity within its fortified walls.

It is remarkable, therefore, that ever since Edward Augustus Freeman's four-volume study of ancient Sicily (originally published between 1891 and 1894), which he not only left unfinished but which he intended to be merely the preface to an even more ambitious project, namely the analysis of the medieval period of this island, there has been no monograph dedicated exclusively to the history of Syracuse. Very noticeably since Moses Finley's study of ancient Sicily (published in 1979) and his contribution to the study of the history of Sicily from its earliest period down to the Arab conquest (1986), there is not a single work devoted to Syracuse alone reflected in the bibliography. Notwithstanding that desideratum, there have certainly been more recent studies of ancient Sicily (Smith and Serrati, 2000; De Angelis, 2003) and there have been numerous works devoted to specific Syracusan figures (Dionysius I by Sanders, 1987; Timoleon by Talbert, 1974); to various periods (the Peloponnesian War by Green, 1970; and by Evans, 2013); to historians (by Pearson, 1987; Diodorus, by Green, 2006); to numismatics (by Holloway, 1969; Kraay, 1976; Mattingly, 1992); to topography (by Evans, 2009); to archaeology (the pioneering work and numerous publications by Paolo Orsi); in addition to travelogues (by Mauceri, 1914; Guido, 1958; Dummett, 2010) and the setting of Syracuse for historical novels (by Green, 1955; Renault, 1966; Manfredi, 2005). There has been hitherto no attempt on the one hand to offer a chronological survey and on the other to assess the changing systems of government in Syracuse and to explore how these had an impact on the power and influence of the city in Sicily and beyond. It is this synthesis that is the focus of the discussion below.

In specific terms, the purpose of this book is to trace the history of Syracuse from its obscure beginnings to a particularly dramatic point in its history in

the mid-fourth century BC,¹ which explains the subtitle: *From Foundation to Fourth Century Collapse*. Moreover, the intention here has been to allow the Syracusan point of view to take precedence over the more usual Athenian or Spartan perspectives; therefore, priority is given to the evidence of the Sicilian historian Diodorus over that of Thucydides, Plato, Strabo or Plutarch wherever this is feasible.² After all, Diodorus reflects – and in places preserves – a unique Sicilian–Syracusan tradition and for this fact his *Bibliotheca* ('A Library of History') must hold pride of place in any analysis of Syracusan affairs. This does not mean, of course, that other literary sources have been excluded or ignored. Indeed, a broad range of sources has been included in the narrative to develop as full a picture as possible of the history of Syracuse. It is also intended that current views on the history of the city and its most famous citizens will be examined and that this questioning will engender further debate. At the same time, there has been an overall concern that the presentation of the material will appeal not only to specialists but also to students and to a readership with a more general or casual interest in the history of this city and its place in antiquity.

The existence of complex foundation stories that are comparable with those of the other great cities in the ancient Mediterranean underscores the elevated status of Syracuse, which, once attained, was not yielded from the early years of the fifth century down to the Second Punic War. The island that we know today as Ortygia was settled in the latter half of the eighth century, according to the earliest written sources and recounted by Thucydides and Strabo. From there the city expanded onto the mainland at Achradina and later grew to include Eurialos at the most western point of the plateau of Epipolai. However, the inconsistent nature of the literary sources makes plain that there is much to be questioned regarding its foundation as a *polis* or community of Greeks who had migrated from the Peloponnese. The claim to such an early foundation certainly gave Syracuse great prestige, but it has dubious historicity and the date is open to considerable adjustment.

Syracuse's achievement of great power was followed by collapse into internal weakness and civil discord, yet at the same time it maintained a constant presence in the affairs of its neighbours and the sense of the city's innate strength found in the later commentators does not appear to have been shaken. During the years between about 500 and 340, the city's governance swung from oligarchy to tyranny or kingship, to democracy and then to a renascent tyranny culminating in severe internal disruption, before the advent of another tyranny, this time of a benign sort. The second-century historian

¹ All dates hereafter are BC unless otherwise stated.

² Strabo's use of the Syracusan chronographer Antiochus also makes his contribution to the study a vital one.

Polybius refers to the universally accepted political philosophy of the cyclical nature of governments that progress from chaos to order and back to chaos. It would not be surprising if, at the back of Polybius' mind, or guided by Timaeus, another Sicilian historian, there was some recollection of Syracuse's turbulent political history, even if by then the city had ceased to play the role it possessed in the fifth and fourth centuries. The changing political systems occupy much of the following discussion.

The military successes of the Deinomenid tyrants were much admired by the earliest recorders of history, and the achievements of this short-lived dynasty cannot be underestimated (Chapter 2). However, the political chaos that followed the removal of Thrasybulus (Chapter 3), the last tyrant of this family, was much more prolonged and fundamental in the way it affected social and political life in Syracuse. Once a form of democracy was established, the state was much weaker than it had been before (Chapter 4), and records of that time show a clear embellishment by local writers. Far from being a formidable power by 431 (Chapter 5), Syracuse avoided any major clash with the Athenians in the latter's first intervention in Sicily between 427 and 424. In 415, initial Syracusan complacency and incompetence, which almost cost the city its independence (Chapter 6), was turned around into one of the most famous victories of antiquity. Yet success bred not confidence but introspection and distrust and made Syracuse's democracy vulnerable (Chapter 7), a situation that was to be exploited by the city's newest tyrant. Finally, with the prospect of a new dynasty taking the reins of power (Chapter 8), the unthinkable happened and Syracuse crashed from Sicilian powerhouse to civic collapse.

By the time that Cicero in the late 70s BC, or the emperor Augustus in the 20s BC, visited the city, Syracuse had been a major player in Mediterranean affairs for nearly half a millennium. When the Byzantine emperor Constans II took up residence in the city in the 660s, the city readied itself to celebrate the completion of its twelfth century. Such an unbroken link with antiquity made the city a colossus among its many rivals. The poet Pindar, whose affinity with the Greeks of Syracuse probably sprang from the fact that he was a beneficiary of their patronage, praised one of the first outstanding leaders of Syracuse, the Deinomenid tyrant Hieron, thus:

A straight-talking man is ready at all times to come forward during every form of government, whether it is a tyranny, or when the turbulent mass has charge of the community, or when wise men do. (Pindar, *Pythian Ode*, 2.86–7)

Hieron is remembered as anything but a straight-talking man, but there were many others who were, and they will also feature prominently in the following pages. Moreover, they make their appearance during all forms of government,

whether the autocracy of the Deinomenids or Dionysius, or the periods of democracy, or the chaos of renascent mob rule – and all in the space of the two centuries examined here.

Richard Evans
Pretoria 2014

Chapter 1

The Myths and the Reality of the Foundation

The first Greeks to come [to Sicily] were Chalcidians from Euboea led by Thucles who founded Naxos and erected a shrine to Apollo Archegetes,¹ which is situated outside the city and where travellers sacrifice before leaving the island to make their journey to the games. In the next year Syracuse was established by Archias, one of the Corinthian Heraclidae. He first expelled the Sicels from the island that is now the acropolis and also a peninsula. Later on the outer suburbs were also walled and the whole city became densely populated. (Thucydides, 6.3.2)

At the beginning of Book 6 of his *History of the Peloponnesian War*, Thucydides gives a brief survey of the cities established by the Greeks in Sicily.² There are no dates but rather a series of relative numbers based on years that begin and end with the summer months and that do not accord with modern chronological reckoning. Thucydides' figure reflects not much more than an approximation of his own assessment of the Greeks' progress in Sicily based on the source that he employed. No systematic record can have been in circulation, but modern precision in such a matter is not to be expected in this earliest period of historical recounting. This caveat must be noted in any attempt to tackle the question of a foundation date for Syracuse.³

Thucydides (6.3.2) begins this background to his coverage of the Athenian intervention in Sicilian affairs by stating that a settlement at what became

¹ Naxos was destroyed by Dionysius I soon after Thucydides wrote this account (see further below). However, the *temenos* of Apollo ('The Founder' or 'The Father') would have been left untouched and the citizens of Tauromenium probably controlled the functions of the shrine and temple in later times since Naxos was never resettled.

² The name Syracuse is not related to a former site in mainland Greece, unlike some other cities in Sicily – notably Naxos, Euboea, Megara and Messene. The name 'Syraco' may have been linked to the marshy area later known as Lysimeleia, that tract of land between the agora of the city and the higher ground which came to possess the temple of Zeus at Polichne. The various interpretations reflecting a mainstream tradition for the name may be found in fragments of Stephanus Byzantinus (*de thematibus*, 2.10) and Vibius Sequester, who both relate a connection with the marsh, and also of the Syracusan poet Epicharmus. See Map 3 for the specified area.

³ For discussions in modern works, see Pearson (1987) 14–15, who notes the difficulty of the date; Holloway (1991) 45–6 recognises the problem albeit rather briefly: 'the standard dates ... are in fact approximations'; cf. De Angelis (2003) 12–13, who is more concerned that the archaeological evidence points to the latter half of the eighth century.

Syracuse was set up a year after Naxos was founded, and that Leontini was established five years after that.⁴ The Megarians who were to found 'Hyblaeon Megara' spent a short time at the newly founded Leontini, but they were expelled from there and then settled briefly on the peninsula called Thapsus just north of Syracuse. They were then granted land by a local Sikel leader named Hyblon, situated a little to the north of Thapsus and including access to the sea. The new town was named Megara after its metropolis and Hyblon in honour of the local Sikel benefactor. However, the leading citizens of this town, which was not prosperous or powerful and lay too close to Syracuse to be fully secure once the latter began to expand its territory, were made to integrate into the Syracusan citizen body.⁵ This forced removal of citizens from one community to another was carried out by Gelon, ruler of Syracuse, from about 485 until 478 BC.⁶ The date of Gelon's overthrow of Megara Hyblaea is recorded by Herodotus as having occurred before the tyrant was visited by Spartan and Athenian envoys in 480. These came to inquire whether he would provide aid for their cause against Xerxes (Herodt. 7.156–7). Thucydides claims that, at the time of their expulsion by the Syracusans, the Megarians had occupied the site north of Thapsus for 245 years. Therefore, according to this figure, Megara Hyblaea would have been established between 730 and 725.⁷ This would suggest that ancient sources believed or recounted that Syracuse, or at least the first settlement on the Island (modern Ortygia) happened roughly six years before the Megarians arrived in Sicily, hence between 736 and 731.⁸

⁴ We cannot even be sure that his source stated that Naxos was founded first, since a Syracusan historian might obscure even that. However, the presence of a senior cult to Apollo suggests that the area around Naxos and the later Tauromenium witnessed the earliest activity of Greek settlers. On the tradition from Ephorus that Naxos and Megara were the first settled towns in Sicily, see de Angelis (2003) 11–12.

⁵ The elite were allowed Syracusan citizenship, but the ordinary citizens, although also brought to Syracuse, were sold to slave traders from overseas, see Herodt. 7.156. Herodotus also notes that at another nearby town, named Euboea, similar events occurred.

⁶ All dates are BC unless otherwise indicated.

⁷ The general consensus for a date for the forced removal of the citizens of Megara Hyblaea after a siege appears to be 483/2, although this is not recorded, except that it occurred during the rule of Gelon. Diodorus almost certainly covered this event in Book 10 of his history, but this section, which ends in 481 (10.32), survives only in fragments. Megara was finally destroyed only in 214 by the Romans besieging Syracuse and is duly noted by Livy, 24.35.2, probably using Polybius as a source. By the time of the Second Punic War, Megara had more likely become a garrison fort on the northern edge of Syracusan territory rather than a civil community, as Thucydides, 6.49.4, 6.75.1, 6.94.1, had already noted 200 years before. On the early history of Megara Hyblaea and the foundation date based on the length of occupation, see De Angelis (2003) 12.

⁸ Thucydides adds (6.4.1) that the city of Gela on the south coast of Sicily was 45 years younger than its powerful neighbour on the eastern coast of the island. Gela's foundation

This traditional and still widely held date is neither accurate nor conceivable, however sincere Thucydides' attempt at precision might appear to be.⁹ Dates as early as this in the history of the Mediterranean cannot possibly be so exact and such dating reflects an attempt by the first historians of Syracuse, which the Romans were later to copy, to achieve prominence through the supposed antiquity of the origins of their city. Syracuse's beginning may belong to the last two or three decades of the eighth century BC, between about 730 and 700, but this is not at all certain. The date is really an extrapolation from Thucydides obtained from an unnamed source, probably Antiochus of Syracuse, and can easily be disputed and overturned as being the product of Syracusan self-promotion and propaganda.¹⁰ Although Thucydides' history provides the earliest available literary evidence for Syracuse, since Herodotus does not show an interest in the founding of the city,¹¹ the much later *Geography* of Strabo, late first century BC to early first century AD,¹² adds vital and almost certainly corrective documentation.

In contrast to Thucydides' cursory mention of Syracuse's origins, Strabo provides considerable detail about its beginning and early growth.¹³ His initial statement is actually vaguer than Thucydides', but Strabo adds material that seriously calls into question the traditional date of the Syracusan foundation:

date on modern reckoning would therefore be between 691 and 686.

⁹ Thus see Hall (2014) 39, who considers the date to be ca. 733, with pottery to confirm this argument dating roughly to the last quarter of the eighth century.

¹⁰ Antiochus is generally considered to have lived in the second half of the fifth century BC and his work was directly accessed by Thucydides. This contention has some problems, in that a manuscript circulated in Sicily at the end of the 420s may not have been available to a reader in mainland Greece if indeed such copies were made at this time of considerable instability. The whereabouts of Thucydides during this period are not known, nor is the date that he composed Books 6 and 7 of his history. Both books were edited after 404, when the restoration of relatively peaceful conditions in the Mediterranean would have made circulation of literature easier. The early history of Sicily at the beginning of Book 6 may therefore not have been in the original, indicating a later insertion by the historian. Thucydides may have consulted the Syracusan Hermocrates or his fellow Athenian Alcibiades for details about Syracuse, since like him they spent time in exile in the later stages of the war between Athens and Sparta. For Thucydides' possible use of Alcibiades as an informant, see Brunt (1993) 17–46.

¹¹ The foundation of Syracuse was admittedly beyond the scope of Herodotus' theme, but it is perhaps curious that a stay in Thurii, which was within the orbit of Syracusan influence, did not inspire a comment about the earliest history of the city.

¹² On the possible date of circulation of Strabo's work, composed probably in the decade after 10 BC with additions up to AD 18, see Syme (1995) 356–67; Lindsay (1997) 484–507.

¹³ Thucydides, of course, provides much more detail about the city and its geographical location in the course of the two books devoted to the siege by the Athenians.



Figure 1.1 The temple of Apollo at Delphi visited by Myscellus and Archias before they sailed across the Ionian Sea (Strabo, 6.1.12, 6.2.4).

Archias founded the city of the Syracusans having sailed from Corinth about the same time as Naxos and Megara were established. They say that Archias and Myscellus went to Delphi at the same time in order to ask the god for an oracle, and while they were there they were first asked whether they preferred wealth or health. And Archias chose wealth and Myscellus health, and it was given to the one to found the city of the Syracusans and to the other to found the city of Croton. (Strabo, 6.2.4; cf. 6.1.12; and see Figure 1.1)

The first issue here is Strabo's source and the second concerns the foundation of Croton, which Strabo appears to indicate happened shortly before that of Syracuse. Like Thucydides, however, Strabo fails to acknowledge his main source, although during his discussion of some of the topographical features of the Island at Syracuse, particularly the phenomenon of the Arethusa fountain, he does refer to a number of authorities, such as Pindar, Hecataeus and Timaeus.¹⁴

¹⁴ This is the sole reference in this section of the work to the Sicilian-born historian Timaeus, who, if the evidence from Diodorus is any indication, covered the history of

At the beginning of the section devoted to Sicily, Strabo used Posidonius, whom he notes (6.2.1) as an authority on the general triangular shape of the island and the distances between the three capes: Pelorias ('The Straits'), Lilybaeum and Pachynus.¹⁵ Still, Strabo did not entirely agree with the information that he found in this work and refers to another source at this point, which he names as a *Chronography*, giving variant distances between the three capes of Sicily, the author of which was surely Antiochus of Syracuse. Posidonius' geographical study of the Mediterranean world was the model for Strabo's own *Geography*, but he was heavily reliant on Antiochus (6.1.1) for geographical information and notes about the foundation of cities in southern Italy and Sicily. Of Antiochus, next to nothing is known, except that he wrote in the second half of the fifth century. He is usually considered to have been a native of Syracuse and he wrote a history of Magna Graecia, Sicily and his city down to 424. The ending is precise because Diodorus (12.71.2) gives the terminus for the historical coverage of his work. Strabo most likely used Antiochus extensively as his supplementary text to the more recent work of Posidonius, which covered a wider geographical area.¹⁶ Thucydides may also have used Antiochus or an intermediate source, such as an eye witness, for his brief account of early Sicilian history. However, the congruency of the information from Thucydides and Strabo suggests that Antiochus was the source of some if not all the information about southern Italy and Sicily. Where Posidonius is referenced by Strabo, the former may also have drawn on the Syracusan historian. In sum, Thucydides used Antiochus directly or via an oral intermediary, while Strabo used Antiochus directly or via Posidonius. Either way, the ultimate source for information about the earliest period of Syracuse was Antiochus.

When Strabo reaches his survey of Syracuse, he states that he has already recounted the foundation of Croton and so he does not repeat that episode.

Syracuse in detail and would have a great deal of useful material for Strabo to have accessed. However, plainly Timaeus is mentioned here from memory and not in the context of geographical information about Syracuse but rather as in agreeing with a note about Pindar and the River Alpheus rising as the Arethusa Spring on the Island (Ortygia) that is dismissed by Strabo, after much discussion, as not credible. Timaeus' manuscript was not open before the geographer's eyes – surprising, perhaps, since his coverage of Sicilian affairs will have been extensive, but obtaining such detail was not uppermost in Strabo's scheme.

¹⁵ Posidonius was born in Apamea on the Orontes in about 135 and died in Rhodes or possibly in Rome in about 51 BC. Posidonius also wrote a history of his times, a treatise on military tactics, Arrian, *De Tactica*, 1.1–2, while his geographical studies were certainly employed by both Diodorus and Caesar.

¹⁶ Antiochus' history must also have had an extensive scope to have included many of the cities in the broader region (Magna Graecia), but it had a much tighter focus than that of Posidonius. If Strabo had direct access to Antiochus, it indicates that this history was still circulated 400 years after its completion.

He does mention that Archias went on to found Syracuse. This became such a wealthy city that its name grew to be synonymous with extreme luxury to the extent that the following proverb came into common usage: 'The Syracusan tax would be insufficient for them.' There are two points of interest here. The first is the date of the Syracusan foundation. Strabo clearly places this after that of Croton with no discussion of the chronology, although this means that he is at odds with the dating that is found in Thucydides' text. This also suggests that Strabo made use of a chronology he found in the work of either Antiochus or Posidonius. The second is the origin of the proverb or *παροιμία* regarding the extravagance of the Syracusans, which is perhaps not likely to be traced back to Antiochus as his *floruit* would make a reference only to the Deinomenid tyranny (485–466 BC) plausible. This was certainly remembered as being a time of affluence and military dominance; however, it probably more likely recalls the tyranny of Dionysius I (405–367) or even the kingship of Hieron II (265–215 BC) and therefore would originate in the work of Posidonius instead. The two points here show a clear discrepancy between the accounts of Thucydides and Strabo, in the former between what is now largely the accepted foundation date and in the latter including the odyssey of the *oikist* Archias, which necessarily leads to a much later settlement date. Moreover, the activities of Archias, his motivation for sailing to Sicily and the result of his travels also require some attention.

Strabo gives some indication about what he thought was the date of Syracuse's foundation when he describes the establishment of Sybaris and Croton. If the dates of foundation of these two cities in Magna Graecia are chronologically synchronised with that of Syracuse, this brings the Sicilian city's foundation date down by nearly twenty years. Further detail, this time from Thucydides, probably also affects the dating and would actually bring forward the Syracuse foundation date into the seventh century. Thucydides states that Archias belonged to the Heraclidae clan at Corinth, who traced their origins back to Heracles (Hercules) and the invasion of the Peloponnese by the Dorians. Hence Archias must also have belonged to the Bacchiadae, who ruled the city between ca. 750 and 650 before they too were expelled when Cypselus made himself tyrant. The expulsion of the Bacchiadae (Heraclidae) may be linked closely with Archias' travels, which eventually brought him via Delphi and southern Italy to Sicily. But this also points to an actual foundation date of as many as eighty years later than the tradition as relayed by Thucydides. The settlement of southern Italy by Greeks from the mainland must logically have occurred before they ventured further south. Therefore the foundation of centres such as Sybaris and Croton may well have occurred by as much as a generation before their neighbours along the eastern shores of Sicily. Thucydides was not interested in the presence of the Greeks in Magna Graecia, although they came to feature in his account, and he missed the opportunity of placing the Sicilian cities in a true historical context.

Strabo, however, provides this information, but in a rather clumsy fashion albeit in the correct order: southern Italy first, but geographically inverted west–east instead of east–west. At the start of his survey, he cites Antiochus for the various settlements in a work he claims was written about Italy (Strabo, 6.1.4). Strabo's objective of describing each site in turn in specific geographical regions means that he has to deal with Sybaris and Croton (Strabo, 6.1.12–13) and then there is a lengthy gap before, having introduced Sicily, he arrives again at Syracuse.¹⁷ But this is only after starting his coverage at the Straits before working in a southerly direction, before reaching Syracuse yet then forgetting to refer back to the Croton episode.

In his survey of the Peloponnese, Strabo preserves what appears to be a curious and irrelevant item (8.6.22), that those who had chosen to accompany Archias set out from Tenea and not from Corinth, which conflicts with his earlier statement (6.2.4). Tenea is a town situated inland about 60 stadia (11 kilometres or about 7 miles) from Corinth and therefore it did not possess a harbour (Paus. 2.5.4). It was about midway on the road to Mycenae, south of the Isthmus.¹⁸ Strabo may indicate a religious ceremony prior to the departure, in that Archias and the crew of his ship or ships gathered at the temple of Apollo at Tenea.¹⁹ A *temenos* of Apollo, whose cult was intricately bound up with successful future adventures, is not an unlikely venue as a meeting place; and Thucydides notes as such when he first mentions the Greeks arriving in Sicily. However, Archias had already been to Delphi; and Corinth, like most Greek cities, had its own temple to the same god (see Figure 1.2). There does not appear to have been a pressing reason to visit a small centre such as Tenea; and if the Apollo cult there was in some way more strongly connected with expeditions overseas than anyway else, no information about this has been preserved by a writer such as Pausanias (2.5.4). Therefore, there is a possibility that there is more here than is simply superfluous. If Archias and other Bacchiadae had taken refuge in Tenea after they had been expelled from Corinth, then while they could not have sailed away from Corinth, there were a number of Peloponnesian harbours, such as Epidaurus or Argos, from which they might have sailed. Thus Strabo's introduction of these two additional items of information – the assembly at Tenea and the departure point being away from Corinth – may appear incompatible with his earlier account of Syracuse's origin. Yet this detail could point to a much later date for Syracuse's beginning, with settlers who were

¹⁷ Strabo again gives Antiochus as his authority for the foundation of Croton.

¹⁸ Pausanias' figures are rather suspect, since in fact Tenea is 19 kilometres (12 miles) from modern Corinth and from the latter to Mycenae the distance is 42 kilometres (26 miles).

¹⁹ See Pausanias, 2.5.4, for the temple of Apollo at Tenea. Apollo was the chief deity of the town, although that in itself is not exceptional. See Levi (1971) 143 for the temple at Tenea, and n. 34 for the ancient site being close to Klenia.

mostly of Corinthian origin and perhaps supporters of an oligarchy that had recently been displaced, these exiles sailing not from their home city but from some other unnamed port. In the course of his research, therefore, Strabo seems to have collected two quite discrete memories of the city's foundation. The first placed that event as nearly contemporary with the foundation of Croton, while the second might have indicated a mid-seventh-century foundation.

Strabo also notes (6.2.4) that Archias was not the sole member of the Bacchiadae in the expedition because he names a certain Chersicrates ('of the Heraclidae clan') who was deputed to set up a settlement on Corcyra. Chersicrates must also have been accompanied by a sufficiently strong band of followers since they are said to have ejected the inhabitants from the island and replaced them.²⁰ Archias, with presumably as many if not more fellow Corinthian/Dorian settlers, sailed from Corcyra, making land again at a place named by Strabo (6.2.4) as Zephyrium.²¹ This has been identified as Capo Bruzzano in Calabria, which, if Locri had already been founded, was on the southern edge of the *chorē* of the community of the 'Western Locrians' (*Locri Epizephyrii*).²² Locri is said to have been established between 700 and 650; and before the arrival of Archias, it was no place for this band of pioneers to settle or trade.²³ It is perhaps significant that Strabo (6.1.7) gives the foundations of Croton, Syracuse and Locri as all occurring within quite a short space of time. The order in which Strabo places Locri suggests that it was a little later than Syracuse, but this may again reflect a Syracusan authority that would necessarily place the former, its longstanding but junior ally, in a subordinate position. What is more important is that Strabo believed that Croton was founded first, that the traditional date

²⁰ Strabo names the people living on Corcyra as Liburnians whose origins were in Illyria or Dalmatia. Liburnians, at least, are also found further along the eastern coast of the Adriatic Sea. Corcyra was later to have close ties with Corinth, although these were not always harmonious – unlike Syracuse, which maintained very good relations with its metropolis. This perhaps was in spite of the reason why those Corinthians who were formerly an elite had come to Sicily. The tale of the Corcyrans occupation looks rather as if it is a doublet with that of the foundation of Syracuse. Both groups of settlers expelled native dwellers from an island and took possession. However, Corcyra (Corfu) is very much larger than the Island (Ortygia) at Syracuse and the likelihood that all the 'Liburnians' were driven out seems, on balance, unlikely. Some peaceful co-existence probably occurred.

²¹ Strabo, 6.1.7, states: '[A]fter [Cape] Heraklion there is a headland of Locri that is named Zephyrium, having a harbour [beach] facing towards the westerly winds.' The winds more likely are north-westerly, but since the coast faces east this would mean that Strabo believed that the beach on Zephyrium faced northwards and hence received winds from that quarter rather than being protected from these winds.

²² See Jones (1924) 3.73 for the town of Bruzzano Zeffiri, which has preserved the original Greek name. Note that Locri has a traditional foundation date of 680 BC.

²³ For a more recent discussion of the founding of Locri, see Guido (1972) 170.

for Croton is 710 BC and that Sybaris had been established before then. Strabo considered Sybaris the older settlement; and when its later poor reputation is taken into account, a certain degree of jealousy and bias might well have entered the tradition about its history, as well as a fudging of the dates of settlement in southern Italy and in eastern Sicily.

It is necessary to return to Strabo's account to relate the interaction of Croton with Sybaris before coming to Locri and Syracuse. In relating the founding of Croton, Strabo (6.1.12) recalls that a certain Myscellus, who was physically impaired – perhaps having suffered from polio as a child – but who was about to set out overseas with a group of Achaeans, went to Delphi to seek an oracle. He was directed to a place that was later to become Croton. But when he arrived there he also went to Sybaris, which was already flourishing, it seems. Preferring the site of Sybaris to that advised by the oracle, he returned to Delphi to question whether it would be sacrilegious to ignore the advice of Apollo and instead settle at Sybaris. Perhaps Myscellus had the intention of expelling the Greeks who were already at Sybaris and appropriating the place for himself and his followers. However, he was left in no doubt that he was to ignore Sybaris and settle where the god ordered.

Diodorus (8.17) is the sole writer between Thucydides and Strabo to recount the history of the Greeks in Magna Graecia and Sicily and whose history survives in substance.²⁴ His attempt to record a universal history, but one that has a distinct Sicilian flavour, means that the foundation of the Greek city-states in the region must have figured prominently in the original conception. Unluckily Book 8, in which this material would have been featured, survives in a series of meagre fragments and those appear to have been collected in a rather haphazard fashion. Notwithstanding these gaps, what there is can aid the search for a later date for the foundation of Syracuse.

Diodorus appears to have placed the arrival of the Greeks in southern Italy and Sicily as roughly contemporary with Rome's first kings. This might suggest that he subscribed to the conventional mid-eighth-century dates that later became the canon for the Greek settlements. Closer inspection, however, reveals a less straightforward nature of the text, always bearing in mind its fragmentary

²⁴ Diodorus' work was a *Bibliotheca* or a history with an encyclopaedic approach derived from many sources. However, the historian has a tendency to have at hand usually two works, which he often copies without much or any integration between them. This can be both useful and frustrating, since on the one hand the sources are often named, but on the other hand confusion can occur when the information is used without any attempt to integrate the material. For a recent discussion of Diodorus' work, objectives and sources, see Green (2006) 7–34. Cicero's speeches against Gaius Verres were written in 70 BC, and therefore at least a generation before Diodorus' work was circulated. As political rhetoric their content is less useful here, but the speeches still provide useful topographical evidence. However, they show little interest in the earlier history of the city.

nature. Diodorus appears to have described the foundation of Rome at the start of Book 8, although the introduction to the book contains references to the people of Velia and the Persian Wars. The focus at this point deals with the observance of ritual and cult (Diod. 8.1.1–3). After describing the rivalry between Romulus and Remus, Diodorus turns to events in the Peloponnese, but these appear to refer to the wars between the Spartans and Messenians between the eighth and the fourth centuries (Diod. 8.7–8). There is then preserved a curious episode that appears to be related to an earlier stage in the life of Archias, when he was still living in Corinth, and the violent death of a young man or boy named Actaeon, who was the object of the older man's romantic attentions (Diod. 8.9–10).²⁵ It is not stated that this was the reason why Archias felt obliged to leave Corinth; and while this activity may have caused this member of the ruling oligarchy to become so unpopular that he felt obliged to leave the city, a more general observation about the Bacchiadae as a whole may have been contained in the original account. While it appears to be chronologically closely situated to the story of Romulus and Remus, it may simply be setting the scene for Archias' later adventures, which have not survived in Diodorus, Books 8 or 9.²⁶ If the excerptor has kept to the order in the original then Diodorus next returned to events in the Peloponnese (Diod. 8.11–13), but the attention given to Aristomenes in this section again suggests a wide survey of events from the eighth to the late seventh centuries yet also includes this wily heroic figure of the Messenians.²⁷ The next excerpt concerns Numa Pompilius, second king of Rome (ca. 715–673) and his attention to correct religious and judicial practice.²⁸ The interest of the excerptor seems to be directed to the contrasts between good and bad behaviour. Following Numa is a Median king named as Deioces, another worthy ruler. This same Deioces is identified by Herodotus (Herodt. 1.96–101) as the first king of independent Media, which broke away from Assyria in about

²⁵ For a detailed discussion of this episode, with all its literary and mythical associations, see Carfora (2007) 159–67. The suggestion that this tale was already established in the tradition by the early part of the seventh century based on the evidence of Archilochus, 167, seems too early when the poet is usually considered to have lived and written in the middle years of that century, Lattimore (1975) 1.

²⁶ Both books are fragmentary. Book 8 clearly covers events into the sixth century, while excerpts from Book 9 indicate perhaps a focus on Solon, Croesus and Pisistratus; Book 10 begins with the sack of Sybaris in 510.

²⁷ For the difficulty in dating Aristomenes of Messenia, see Ogden (2004) 130.

²⁸ The traditional dates are what they are and Rome's foundation is almost certainly a century later than the Roman historians claimed. Diodorus (8.14) or the Byzantine preserver of his work alleged that Numa was a student of Pythagoras. This is plainly a clumsy error, but it does rather expose the uncertainty regarding the earliest rulers of Rome. A Roman ruler of the late sixth century could conceivably have had contact with Croton while Pythagoras was a resident.

670 and so is contemporary with the last years of Numa's reign.²⁹ Herodotus placed this event in the eighth century, while Numa, if a historical figure, would certainly have been somewhat later than the beginning of the seventh century, and therefore synchronising these subjects is difficult. Still, Diodorus would have taken his cue for early Roman kingship dates from a Hellenistic writer such as his frequently referenced Timaeus or another perhaps Romano-Italian source. The latter would most certainly have wanted to place Numa alongside another exemplary and ancient subject. Both subjects – if they existed at all – belong rather to the seventh century. Thus the coverage of Myscellus (Diod. 8.17–18), although brief and confined to three oracles he received from the Pythia – the first concerning his chances of becoming a father, foreseen but only when he had founded Croton; the second on the location of this place; and the third the injunction against any preference for the site of Sybaris –, must then be meant to make him a good exemplar along with Aristomenes, Deioces and Numa in counterpoise to the actions of Romulus and Archias. The aid given to Myscellus is not recorded, but the text (Diod. 8.18–20) next deals with the excesses of the Sybarites and their allies in Miletus. However, there is nothing about the actual foundation stories of the cities. Book 8 of Diodorus' history ostensibly relates events prior to 700, but the revelations about Sybarite luxury are placed before coverage of Rome's third king Tullus Hostilius (Diod. 8.25), traditionally ruling between 672 and 642, and the poets Tyrtaeus and Terpander, both dated to the seventh century.³⁰ A notice about the Roman king Tarquinius Priscus, traditional dates 616 to 579, and Locrian concerns about Crotoniate expansionism, probably to be dated after the destruction of Sybaris in 510, conclude the excerpts from this book, which indicates that it must have covered a lengthy chronology of roughly 250 years from the eighth to the concluding years of the sixth.³¹ In all the jumble of collected items from Diodorus' original narrative, the beginning of Greek settlement in southern Italy may easily be moved forward by as much as fifty to a hundred years and so not conflict with Strabo's evidence.

While Strabo notes that Croton became famous as a city that was highly successful in the Games at Olympia – and presumably in the other major events at Delphi, Nemea and Isthmia – and that being a Crotoniate became synonymous with possessing good health, and moreover that the city was established with the help of Archias, he does not draw the distinction between Syracusan wealth and Croton's health until he describes the former's

²⁹ The name Deioces is problematic and probably a mistake by Herodotus (Herodt. 1.101–2), for Phraortes, father of Cyaxares, is regarded as the founder of independent Media, while his son conquered Persia.

³⁰ Terpander is generally considered to have preceded Tyrtaeus chronologically.

³¹ For the date of a Locrian appeal to Sparta for military aid against Croton, see Diodorus, 18.31; Evans (2013) 32.

foundation. But it seems to be clear that he regarded Croton's foundation as having come shortly before that of Syracuse. This ought not to be remarkable if the Greeks mainly from the region around the Corinthian Gulf extended their visits and settlements to the islands of the northern Ionian Sea, of the southern Adriatic, and from there to southern Italy and from there along the eastern coast of Sicily. Therefore, providing Strabo was using a credible source, it must indicate that Archias had arrived along the southern coast of Italy and was probably looking for a place to settle. Since Sybaris and Croton further north were now no longer available, and if Locrians were already active along this stretch of coast, Archias had no choice but to look further afield. Sailing along the coast, Archias arrived at Zephyrium, where he is said to have met with another band of Dorians who had originally joined the Megarians led by Lamis and were eventually to settle at Megara Hyblaea. These had evidently broken away from the main group, intent, claims Strabo, on returning to the Peloponnese.³² These were persuaded or were willing to join Archias and head south again with him. It would be interesting, of course, to have some idea of Archias' route along the coast from Zephyrium, and to know whether or not he entered the Straits, which were now close by. Two sites here would have made for excellent trade and settlement opportunities, but, like Sybaris, Croton and Locri were already well established, and according to the traditional dates both Rhegium and Zancle (Messene) had been founded a little earlier than any others in the region. This would probably explain why Archias and his followers were forced ever southwards in search of a suitable place to beach and occupy. If Syracuse's traditional date was correct, it would mean that far more fertile land, better harbours and more lucrative opportunities closer to mainland Greece and Corinth were rejected out of hand in preference for an uncertain spot further afield. Archias was evidently not prepared to use force to obtain the beach at Naxos or Megara. Therefore, the first available and feasible place to halt was at the Island, which is now named Ortygia; and it was here that the former Corinthian citizens set up what was probably a trading post with contact into the interior of the island and the Sicel communities there. This aspect of Syracuse's *raison d'être* did not alter during the next six centuries, and the riches extracted from the various tithes that could be imposed on traders were to provide the fundamentals from which growth in population and power was to be possible and rapid.

³² It is a commonplace of the Greek exploration and settlement in the western Mediterranean that there was later conflict along ethnic lines between Ionians and Dorians, but Strabo here may also indicate tensions within a predominantly Dorian group of pioneers. The Greeks who finally settled at Megara Hyblaea wandered for a number of years and some perhaps became disheartened at the prospect of failing to find a suitable place for trading purposes or not being able to make new homes.

The arrival of Archias at the Island is said by Thucydides (6.3.2) to have been met with opposition, but this was evidently overcome quickly. Any Sicel community living on the Island would have been small and if faced with a piratical attack unable to defend itself. But it is fanciful to suggest that these natives were simply expelled or 'driven out', as Thucydides claims, since that would have meant a retreat by sea. Either these people were massacred or the men killed and the women and children enslaved and made an integral part of the new community, since the Greek arrivals were surely exclusively male. Strabo has no record of this event, merely that the city was established and grew quickly because of its fertile hinterland and its good harbours (Strabo, 6.2.4). Thucydides also notes that the Island that contained the city's acropolis was in his time joined to the mainland by a mole. No note of the event itself has remained and it took place at an early stage in the city's growth. Maps showing a land bridge north from the Island (Ortygia) to Achradina are not that convincing when the current landscape is inspected and the present connecting mole probably overlies the earliest manmade structure. The idea of a northerly land-bridge was more than likely influenced by the causeway that linked the island of Motya (Isola San Pantaleo) to Byrgi, but there the water level was a great deal less deep than it was on the northern edge of Syracuse's Ortygia. Even today, after a decline in the water level around the Small Harbour (see Map 3), it would be impossible to throw up a causeway without modern engineering and technology. The initial Greek settlement was not large, but it is as well to remember that in the fourth century, if not before, 10,000 mercenary troops garrisoned the Island and presumably lived there with their families and slaves. Moreover, the temple complexes on Ortygia will also have contained numerous residents. A total population in the first hundred years of occupation may well have exceeded 30,000 before the area in Achradina was formally annexed into the city.³³ An influx of new settlers during the course of the seventh and sixth centuries would have made expansion onto the mainland a natural enough course to take. And it is certainly not inconceivable that, during the uncertain environment of pioneering settlements, Syracuse was actually founded twice or more and received a number of waves of settlers at the initial stage. Certainly later in its history the city received many new citizens, some introduced by rulers such as Gelon or Dionysius and some arriving when there was a more general influx, for example during the rule of Timoleon in the latter half of the fourth century.

If Homer's epic poem *Odyssey* is to be dated to about or soon after 700 then this would also support a later date for the arrival of the Greeks, especially in

³³ Like Motya, the causeway may initially have provided a landward contact to the mainland, but it also gave ease of access to a burial site. For Motya's causeway link with Byrgi, see Evans (2009) 11–12.

Sicily.³⁴ The details contained in the story of Odysseus' 10-year journey to his home on Ithaca following the end of the Trojan War reflect a time of exploration, piracy, and settlement overseas. The older consensus view that the Homeric epics *Iliad* and *Odyssey* were fixed in the mid-eighth century supported an earlier date for the establishment of Greek cities at roughly the same time in Sicily. A date fifty to a hundred years later in the creation of the *Odyssey* would illustrate the uncertain times following the expulsion of members of the ruling elite from cities such as Corinth, which played so major a role in opening up the western Mediterranean for the Greeks as a whole. The ever-present thread of islands in Odysseus' homecoming – Phaeacia, island of the Cicones and Cyclopes, and finally Ithaca itself – has the distinctive hallmarks of the sort of island-hopping that Archias and his Dorian followers are also said to have undergone sailing from the Peloponnese via Corcyra, southern Italy, and finally to Ortygia. The theme of homecoming or homemaking through travels on the sea was probably common at this time, reflecting both actual events and the adventures that made for a good tale: strange lands, alien customs and peoples, monsters and inimical deities all combined to enrich the stories that were less exotic, perhaps, but just as hazardous. And besides the poetical unreal, there are also specific references to technological advances that also point to the seventh rather than to the eighth century BC. Odysseus and his followers used 50 oared vessels in their adventures and pentekonters were regularly employed in the exploration and settlement by Greeks such as Archias. Pentekonters were probably not that common in the eighth century, but they were ubiquitous a century later. Homer's pentekonters therefore support a later date of composition for the poem and therefore by association a later date for the foundation of Syracuse.³⁵

The temple to Apollo on the Island (Ortygia) is generally considered to have been under construction by the end of the seventh century.³⁶ Ordinarily a shrine to this deity would have been the first erected in gratitude for the occupation of a favourable site. The later date for the occupation of the Island thus places the *Apollonion* a mere two generations after the arrival of Archias and his followers, and at a time when the new settlement was in a process of consolidation and expansion but before the mainland opposite at Achradina had been annexed to the growing community. The size of the Apollo temple on Ortygia and the sophistication of the structure plainly illustrate a *polis* that possessed wealth

³⁴ For the argument dating the Homeric epics to a later date, see Taplin (1986) 50: 'Date ... somewhere in the area of 750 – 650 B.C.', which is supported by Griffin (1987) 7 with the more specific note, 'We shall not go far wrong if we think that the *Iliad* was composed not later than 700, and the *Odyssey* not later than 675 B.C.' Cf. Powell (2004) 30–34, who argues for the much earlier date of around 800. See also Appendix 1.

³⁵ For references to Homer's *Odyssey*, see Appendix 1.

³⁶ For the proposed date of this building, one of the earliest peristyle temples in the Mediterranean, see Evans (2009) 48–9.



Figure 1.2 The temple of Apollo at Corinth with the Acrocorinth in the background. The Bacchiadae were expelled from the city at roughly the same time as the foundation of Syracuse.

and power even at this early stage. The rapidity with which the *Apollonion* was followed by the building of the temple of Zeus out at Polichne bears testimony to a sustained surge in prosperity and resources, just as Thucydides notes (6.3.2). Nonetheless, it is curious that no mention of a shrine or *Heroon* of Archias has survived, although he was the founder or *oikist* of the new community.³⁷ It should have been situated in the oldest sector of the Island and so close to

³⁷ Carfora (2007) 164 notes a tradition transmitted by Plutarch, actually an anonymous author in the second century, *Amat. Narr.* 2, that Archias was killed by a certain Telephus, one of his followers and a later lover, some time after he had founded Syracuse. A violent death may indicate a period of *stasis* in Syracuse between the original settlers, especially if this Telephus was also of the Bacchiadae. It might well account for the absence of an *oikist's* shrine to Archias had he become a tyrant in his newly founded city. The tale is evidently a more elaborate version of the fragment that remains from Diodorus' account and may indicate the extent of this historian's coverage. The story may also have been intended to remind the audience of the end of tyranny at Athens, which was initiated by another murder, that of Hipparchus, brother of the tyrant Hippias.

the city's earliest temple, not surprisingly the temple of Apollo, forming another link between Archias and that particular cult.

The earlier date of the arrival of the Dorian Greeks in Sicily advocated by Thucydides must be derived from a composition with inherent bias such as can be expected from a Syracusan citizen who sought to glorify his city's beginnings. This composition would surely have pushed the city's origins back to within a year of that of Naxos, its Ionian competitor further north along the eastern seaboard of Sicily. Thucydides' notice is altogether too neat and tidy for comfort. He may perhaps be forgiven for giving a misleading picture, since his interest was not in the settlements per se but in fixing a background for the Athenian interest in Sicily. That his evidence has taken precedence over that of Strabo is an indication of the esteem in which Thucydides has been held by scholars in more modern times, but clearly some caution has been voiced in recent years, and some adjustment is keenly needed if the foundation stories and their dating are to make sense in a real historical and geographical context.

In terms of geography, making Syracuse the first/second Greek city of Sicily and Magna Graecia is unconvincing because the route is all wrong, as Thucydides makes quite plain when he relates the passage of three Athenian expeditionary forces against Syracuse.³⁸ None sailed directly across the Ionian Sea – each hugged the coast until making the shorter (and safer) crossing from Corcyra to the Iapygian Peninsula. Even Eurymedon, who was sent with ten ships directly to Nicias at Syracuse in the winter of 414/13, actually joined his fellow general Demosthenes at Corcyra on his return voyage (Thuc. 7.33.3). If this was the usual and time-honoured route from Greece to Sicily then it becomes obvious that the first places to be settled from about 700 were those sites along the south Italian coast around to Rhegium and only then the east coast of Sicily. Geographical sense then illustrates that Sybaris and Croton would be settled before Naxos and Syracuse.

Why, then, is the primacy attributed to Syracuse? First, this is because the city became the most powerful in Sicily and Magna Graecia and, like Rome later on, it was considered imperative that it had to possess a suitably dignified and ancient origin. Secondly, the most influential writers for the period were either Syracusan or Sicilian Greeks. Oddly enough, Strabo seems to indicate that Antiochus did not attribute the greatest antiquity to Syracuse but rather had the order proposed here. Thucydides must therefore have had access to another source or invented his own chronology; and, since Syracuse was the victor in the fight over Athens, perhaps he wanted to project as great an antiquity and power to this city as possible. This means that Thucydides was probably at least economical with the truth, if not indeed mendacious. Diodorus likely used

³⁸ Since the temple to Apollo Archegetes was at Naxos, it was impossible for the Syracusans to leap-frog the existence of this cult of the 'Leader' or 'Father'.

Timaeus as his main source and the chronology of the latter may well have followed that of Thucydides. It should also be noted, however, that Diodorus clearly drew some connection between the flight of the Bacchiadae from Corinth and the foundation of Syracuse.

<i>Poleis</i> in Magna Graecia and Sicily	Generally accepted dates (the Sicilian Greek <i>poleis</i> from Thucydides)	<i>Poleis</i> in Magna Graecia and Sicily	Adjusted dates for the Sicilian Greek <i>poleis</i> (using Strabo)
Pitheculusae	750 (?)	Pitheculusae	750 (?)
Rhegium	740/30	Rhegium	740–10
Naxos	735	Zancle (Messene)	740–10
Syracuse	734–33	Sybaris	710–700
Zancle (Messene)	730	Taras	710–700
Leontini	729–28	Croton	690–80
Megara Hyblaea	728–27	Naxos	690–85
Catane	725	Syracuse	680–75
Sybaris	720	Leontini	675–70
Croton	710	Megara Hyblaea	675–70
Taras	705	Catane	670–65

In conclusion, the argument is that the date of Syracuse's foundation must reasonably be closely connected to the settlement of Sybaris and Croton, as Strabo makes clear. Diodorus' evidence from Book 8 of his history is admittedly fragmentary, and any mention of the foundation of Syracuse is missing. But what we have appears to place his account of the foundation of Sybaris and Croton during or after his coverage (8.14) of the reign of Rome's second king Numa Pompilius (715–673) and not during his account (8.6) of the reign of Romulus (753–715). Diodorus has information about the reasons why Archias may have been expelled or exiled from Corinth (8.9–10), but he does not focus on the Myscellus episode until 8.17, which may indicate that he dealt with Syracuse before he covered the foundation of Croton. The Archias episode is also placed after the reign of Romulus, however, which still indicates some proximity in the foundation dates between the three cities. As ever, some caution should be voiced, since the story of Archias and Actaeon may simply be an allegorical one, and so a literary construct, but one that may have had a real purpose in the original narrative. In the myth, the hunter Actaeon was killed by his own hounds. The episode related in Corinth is clearly not an exact parallel with the myth, since it is Archias the hunter and his followers who are portrayed as the hounds. Yet this was just the sort of clever interplay of themes that one might expect from a Hellenistic historian such as Timaeus, whom Diodorus employed. And

the allegory may have been utilised to illustrate the injustice of the Bacchiadae at Corinth, which resulted in *stasis* and their expulsion from their city. The exile Archias then sailed away and made amends for his crime by founding one of the great cities of the Mediterranean.³⁹

³⁹ Although see Carfora (2007) 164 for a much less heroic death ascribed to Archias by pseudo-Plutarch, *Amat. Narr.* 2. Just as the origin of Syracuse has its basis in an attempted rape and murder, so too did Rome have its beginning in the rape of Rhea Silvia and later fratricide. Modern readers might find such tales a little sordid, but they are there to illustrate a certain humble origin of what later becomes truly remarkable.

Chapter 2

The Deinomenid Tyranny (ca. 700–466 BC)

Gelon

[T]his story of the rise of Gelo [Gelon] ... and of the battle of Himera ... [is] clearly drawn from local Siceliot sources, probably while H[erodotus] was at Thurii. The traditions followed are not favourable to the great house of Deinomenes, and need not be Syracusan. They are of the greatest importance, since our only full and connected version of Sicilian history is the late and stupid compilation of Diodorus, who apparently made most use of the fantastic and arbitrary Timaeus. (How and Wells [1912] 2.192)

Even if the history of Syracuse is shortened appreciably, as I have argued earlier here, nevertheless there remains a mighty hiatus before the literary sources begin to recount events in this part of Sicily. The earliest temples that can still be seen at Syracuse – the temple of Apollo on the Island and the temple of Zeus at Polichne – are considered on the basis of architectural style to belong to the earliest phase of peripteral temple development and are thus dated to between 620 and 580 BC.¹ Since the Apollo temple lies near the harbour of Syracuse's initial settlement, it is likely to have been an earlier structure than the Olympieion at outlying Polichne some 5 or 6 kilometres to the south of the city and mid-way across the bay.² The completion of a temple to Apollo within about a generation of the Greeks' arrival on the Island, if as late as the 650s, would therefore fit well with the generally accepted date for the temple.³

¹ There may, of course, have been other temples of equal antiquity, but these did not survive either because of subsequent rebuilding or because of later destruction. For example, a small temple dedicated to Archias, which would customarily have been built after his death, is nowhere attested but was presumably situated on the Island – although see Chapter 1, where it is noted that an ignominious death might well have resulted in the *oikist* being forgotten by the citizens of the new settlement.

² See Map 3.

³ Compare this with the construction of the temple of Apollo at Naxos, which must have been within a relatively short time after the Greeks settled there. Both the temple of Apollo and that of Zeus at Syracuse have monolithic columns and clearly point to a period before columns were constructed of drums, a technological advance belonging to the very end of the archaic period of Greek history. For a discussion of the temples, see Evans (2009) 48–50.

Herodotus (6.23–4) digresses from his account of the end of the Ionian War in 494/3 BC to note that some Samian exiles – refugees from the naval defeat at Lade – settled in Zancle (Messene) on the Sicilian coast opposite Rhegium.⁴ In this brief narrative of Sicilian affairs he mentions a certain Hippocrates, the ruler of Gela on the southern coast of the island, who had an alliance with the ruler of Zancle, named as Scythes. Scythes, described as a ‘king’, had sent messages to the Ionian Greeks inviting them to participate in the settlement of a new town at Cale Acte (the ‘Fine Shore’) somewhere along the northern coast of the island. These Samians, who preferred exile to subjection to Persian control, were among the very few Ionians to respond to this request and, having no other alternative, they duly arrived in Rhegium.⁵ The citizens of Zancle were besieging a Sikel town, perhaps the intended location of Scythes’ ‘Cale Acte’, and had left behind them in their own city just a small garrison. Meanwhile, Anaxilas the ruler of Rhegium, who had ambitions to dominate both sides of the Straits for obvious and practical reasons, encouraged the Samians to attack and seize Zancle rather than participate in the uncertain venture of founding a new town. The Samians evidently considered the proposal attractive and occupied the harbour and the town. When Scythes was informed that his city had fallen, he summoned aid from Gela. Herodotus (6.23) reports that Hippocrates answered this summons very quickly, and the fact that he was able to move his army rapidly from Gela to the Straits suggests that he had some measure of control over the other Greek settlements along the eastern seaboard.⁶ Moreover, when he arrived outside Zancle to join forces with the citizens of that city, he ordered the arrest and imprisonment in the town of Inyx of Scythes and his brother Pythogenes for allowing the ‘city which he ruled’ to be taken by invaders.⁷ Such an action certainly implies that Hippocrates had the freedom and power to impose his will on other cities and their rulers, and casts doubt on the claim that Scythes was a king but actually no more than a governor. Hippocrates then began secret talks with the Samians and excluded the citizens of Zancle entirely from his proposal, which was that any wealth inside the town be divided between his Geloans and the Samians. Hippocrates was also to take half the slaves resident inside the town and all those who were in the surrounding countryside, probably in various farms. He seems to have disarmed and enslaved the Zancleans outside the town too, but he turned over to the Samians the 300 most prominent members of the

⁴ For the defeat of the Ionian Greeks at the battle of Lade, see Evans (2015).

⁵ Herodotus mentions that some Milesians accompanied the Samians, but he does not state what their fate might have been when they arrived in Sicily.

⁶ Parke (1933) 10.

⁷ Scythes escaped from Inyx and fled to Persia, where he remained an honoured exile at the court of Darius, Herodt. 6.24. If he was a proxy for Hippocrates, he may well have been a Geloan rather than a Zanclean.

community, whom he believed the newcomers would kill, although these were ultimately spared. Hippocrates then returned to Gela.⁸

The absence of any mention of Syracuse in these regional conflicts in the 490s appears to rule out its holding a position of any influence and certainly not the pre-eminent role it came to hold for much of its later history among the Greek cities of Sicily. The government of the city in its earliest phase is unattested, but it is plausible to assume that Archias and his mainly Bacchiadae followers imposed a regime similar if not identical to the one they had imposed on the people of Corinth. This appears to be confirmed in Herodotus, when he states (7.155) that the *geomoroi* who would have been an elite group, probably the direct descendants of the original Bacchiadae settlers from Corinth, were expelled from the city by the greater body of citizens, who were aided by a group within the community named as ‘*cyllyrii*’ and described as slaves (*douloi*). These slaves were perhaps promised their freedom for support in ridding the city of an oligarchic government. However, those expelled from the city occupied the Syracusan satellite town of Casmenae (modern Bucheri) on the far western boundary of the *chorē*.

Hippocrates was killed in a campaign against the Sicels in the Hybla Mountains soon after the incident at Zancle. The death of Hippocrates in about 492 brought great changes. He had succeeded his brother as ruler of Gela and ruled, like his brother Cleander, for seven years.⁹ He already had two adult sons who were intended to succeed him, but Gelon eliminated Eucleides and Cleander and took power himself. He was in a strong position to thwart the ambitions of Hippocrates’ family, since, as Herodotus (7.154) notes, he had been a member of the ruler’s bodyguard and then achieved a good reputation as a cavalry commander in various campaigns against the other Greek communities in the region.¹⁰ Herodotus claims that of these cities Syracuse, although defeated

⁸ Thucydides (6.4) relates a slightly different tradition, since he believes that the Samians were accompanied by other Ionian allies. These, he says, were expelled by Anaxilas, whose Rhegians occupied Zancle, which he renamed Messene. Hippocrates perhaps had intended that the Samians would continue as his allies in this strategic harbour town, but this ruler of Gela also died around this time, which probably accounts for the upheaval in local loyalties and alliances. The coinage of Messene appears to contradict Thucydides, since pictorial references to the Samians continue after Anaxilas’ occupation of the site in ca. 492. This suggests a more peaceful co-existence or at least the continued employment of Samian craftsmen in the minting of local coins.

⁹ Herodotus, 7.154, claims that Cleander was murdered. The date, if any accuracy may be attributed to the historian here, would be between 500 and 495, and it is of interest in that it coincides with the war between the Ionian Greek and the Persians, which is the focus of the historian in the first half of his history. Cleander’s death seems to be placed in 498, without any concrete evidence.

¹⁰ Herodotus names these as Callipolis, Naxos, Zancle, Leontini and Syracuse, as well as other Sicel communities.

in a battle near Elorus, alone escaped outright domination by Gela through the intervention of its metropolis Corinth. Gela, like Syracuse, had been established by Dorian Greeks, the former from Rhodes and the latter from Corinth – and this common bond may have caused less antipathy between the two.¹¹ However, it should also be noted that the price for peace was the Syracusan surrender of its settlement at Camarina to the Geloans.¹² Since no concessions were apparently granted by Hippocrates, Syracuse's occupation of a subordinate position in the political hierarchy seems irrefutable.¹³

The change in Syracuse's status from minor player to dominant force in Sicily, according to Herodotus (7.156: 'And all at once the city like a sapling shot up and burst into bud'), was plainly the product of Gelon's personal preference for this city over Gela and his foresight in fostering this city's growth. The domestic turmoil in Syracuse, which must have occurred from the end of the 490s and which had resulted in the elite being expelled, presumably, although it is nowhere recorded, led to the introduction of some form of democratic government. However, this government had no time to take a firm root and the appeals for help from the Syracusan elite brought Gelon the ideal opportunity to intervene as their ally. Still, the Syracusan *demos* probably ruled the city for two to three years before he came to the aid of the *geomoroi*. The restoration of this elite went uncontested by the greater citizen body, states Herodotus (7.155), perhaps intimidated by the Geloan show of force or possibly a promise that Gelon would not restore their former rulers. On the contrary, Gelon, perhaps to the surprise of all parties involved including the Geloans, took up residence in Syracuse. This decision brought about an end to the discord at Syracuse, since both the oligarchic and the democratic elements in the community were neutralised by

¹¹ On the foundation and the founders of Gela, Antiphimus and Entimus, see also Diodorus 8.23. Herodotus, 7.153, names only the first but notes that his home was at Lindos on Rhodes.

¹² Camarina was situated closer to Gela, further west along the south coast than to Syracuse. The city had a troubled history: it was frequently attacked and abandoned, and it never acquired any long spell of independence. It was perhaps founded to be an intentional thorn in the side of the Geloans, but it lacked natural defences and never contained a sufficiently strong population to actively impede Gela's imperialist ambitions. See also Chapter 3.

¹³ Diodorus, 10.28.1–3, appears to have recorded a siege of Syracuse by Hippocrates after he had obtained victory in a battle at Elorus immediately following coverage of the battle of Marathon – and so either in 490 or a year earlier. However, Diodorus directs his focus on Hippocrates' observance of the sanctified *temenos* of Zeus at Polichne, which he ordered should not be pillaged. Diodorus also observes rather cynically that this policy was less influenced by piety than by a desire to promote discord among the Syracusans, since the *demos* might consider that the magistrates were in some way implicated in plotting with the Geloans because they had left the temple treasures in situ and not brought them into the city.

the presence of this third party. Gelon went on to rule Syracuse for a further seven years and made the city his home in preference to Gela, although the reason for this move is not fully stated unless it really was that he considered it a more pleasant location.¹⁴

Gelon's illustrious background is attested by Herodotus, for his direct ancestor, Telines, originally from the island of Telos, was evidently among those pioneers who had arrived at Gela with the founders of the new settlement. Furthermore, Gelon was not only, like Hippocrates, a capable military leader, but in a brief notice about Gelon's family and ancestors (Herodt. 7.153–4) the historian also notes that his family provided priests for the cult of the 'Earth deities' perhaps better known as Demeter and Persephone. Telines had been the first to hold the priesthood of this cult and obtained this honour when he intervened in a period of civil unrest in Gela, reconciling the squabbling parties not by armed force but through a display of implements associated with the deities.¹⁵ Herodotus does not expand on this, except to comment on the belief that this Telines, far from being the warrior Gelon seems to have been, was a very mild-mannered individual. As a result of his achieving renewed peace in his *polis*, his fellow citizens, as had been demanded of them by this Telines, acknowledged that he and his descendants would be priests of this cult. Herodotus (7.153) claims that he obtained this detail from informants living in Sicily; and if he composed the last books of his history while a resident in Thurii then he could easily enough have met traders or travellers from Gela or one of the other cities of the region.

Diodorus evidently treated Gelon's rise to power in some detail, but the book of his history in which this was contained, number 10, survives only in fragments.¹⁶ What remains are two anecdotes (10.29), which appear to belong to Gelon's childhood. The first relates to a dream in which Gelon saw himself struck by lightning; he was woken by his dog, which was disturbed by its master's cries. The second recounts an episode in which a wolf stole and ran off with Gelon's wax tablet while he was attending a school. Gelon pursued the wolf to recover his possession; and while he was absent an earthquake occurred, destroying the building in which the school was located and killing the teacher

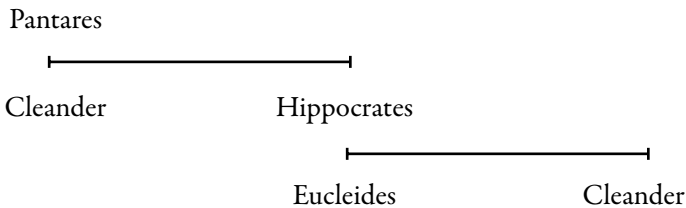
¹⁴ It may have been that the family of Hippocrates retained sufficient influence to make Gelon's stay in Gela uncomfortable; and to avoid *stasis* or civil discord he preferred the more secure Syracuse, to whose most influential citizens he had recently provided military support. Herodotus, 7.156, states that Gelon simply liked Syracuse more than Gela and entrusted the latter to the rule of his brother Hieron.

¹⁵ Herodotus states that one group, described as the Mactorians, possibly a Sicel tribe, had withdrawn from the city to a community, and that they were brought back to Gela by Telines.

¹⁶ Diodorus' chief sources for this period were Ephorus or Timaeus, both of whom will have dwelt at length on Gelon's tyranny, as will have Antiochus in his history of Syracuse.

and all his fellow students. The second tale is easily explicable, in that Gelon was spared for a greater future, but the first is less precise and perhaps is related to his being chosen as a future leader by Zeus. The stories clearly appealed to John Tzetzes (*Hist.* 4.277–8), the Byzantine historian, who included them in his own history and further comments, ‘the writers of history such as Timaeus, Dionysius [Halicarnassus], Diodorus and Dio [Cassius] even affirm that the number of boys killed totalled more than one hundred.’ The number of those killed, a total that Tzetzes himself writes that he cannot confirm, may also be related to the hecatomb or sacrifice of a ‘hundred victims’ to the gods; and hence might again be taken as confirmation of Gelon’s destiny to become a great ruler.¹⁷

The Family of Hippocrates



Unlike, it is to be assumed, Diodorus’ more extensive narrative, it is only in the mid-480s that Syracusan affairs as a focal point in Herodotus’ account begin to loom large. This interest should be taken as an indicator of Syracuse’s first emergence as a top-flight power in Sicily; however, there are a number of issues with Herodotus’ evidence that require some discussion. During this time Syracusan manpower was dramatically augmented, which obviously boosted the city’s military power significantly. Gelon is said by Herodotus to have moved more than half the citizens of Gela to Syracuse, probably to ensure his security in the event that the Syracusans tried to reassert their independence.¹⁸ Moreover, the citizens of Camarina, who were probably mostly Geloan by origin since that city had recently been possessed and repopulated by Hippocrates, were also ordered to become residents of Syracuse. Then Camarina, which had for a brief spell become a civic entity again, was destroyed on the orders of the new ruler of Syracuse.¹⁹ The two events may be placed very soon after Gelon took control of Syracuse, which is traditionally dated to 485. There is, however, a problem with

¹⁷ Tzetzes, prolific scholar and writer of both poetry and historical prose, was clearly well acquainted with Diodorus’ *Bibliotheca*.

¹⁸ Clearly the Geloans were encouraged to move with promises of additional influence and wealth, but at the same time Gela became under-populated and hence became less of a possible threat to Gelon should his brother at any time aspire to supreme power in the region.

¹⁹ Camarina’s chequered history is one of repeated foundations and destructions. In all likelihood many of the civic buildings, especially those with religious connections, were

this date, for if Gelon succeeded Hippocrates at Gela some seven years before he came to Syracuse Herodotus has telescoped the events. He clearly believes that Gelon's seizure of power first at Gela and then at Syracuse was closely linked chronologically. Hippocrates ruled for seven years and therefore must have become tyrant at Gela some years before 493 if he was in the position of being able to move his army very rapidly to Zancle in response to the request of Scythes. The sole absolute date is the battle of Lade in the late summer of 494, followed by the arrival of the exiles from Samos probably in the spring of 493. If Hippocrates had succeeded Cleander about two years earlier, that would mean he died in 488 and Gelon's overall rule of Gela and Syracuse can be extended to probably a decade.

Gelon added to the civilian population not only from Gela and Camarina but also from Megara Hyblaea and a town named as Sicilian Euboea. Neither community had a strong military presence because the population of each cannot have been more than a few thousand. Although on paper both appear to have been small fry and their territories added little to the expanding possessions of Gelon, nonetheless the individuals and families transferred to Syracuse would have further boosted his personal authority since these latest newcomers owed their allegiance to the ruler and his family and not to the city. Moreover, the original Syracusan citizens must have found themselves increasingly outnumbered by these new additions to the civilian population. The destruction and depopulation of Megara is described only briefly by Herodotus, but it must have occurred sometime between 485 and 480 and probably followed a defeat in battle at the hands of Gelon's superior manpower. A short siege followed by the surrender by the Megarians brought surprising results: the leading figures of the *polis* had fully expected to be executed by the victors, but Gelon not only gave them an absolute pardon but also ordered that they and their families vacate their town and move to Syracuse, where they were granted immediate citizenship. However, the *demos* of Megara, which expected to be treated leniently by Gelon because they had played only a subordinate role in the recent fighting, were also ordered to proceed to Syracuse – and when they arrived there, they were not only denied citizenship of the city but were sold as slaves to traders who shipped them overseas. The same procedure was applied to the Euboeans, whose elite families were granted Syracusan citizenship while the broader group of citizens was enslaved. This action was prompted, states Herodotus, because Gelon found the prospect of living with too many of the *demos* or more humble citizens uncongenial. It is much more likely that he considered that Syracuse lacked either the space or the food supply for such an influx of new citizens and also that such an incapacity to feed and house them would be the cause of future

not destroyed, which made reoccupation of the site relatively straightforward. Fortifications, however, were probably dismantled.

civic unrest. The smaller number of affluent families would be the cause of far fewer problems; and indeed their wealth would open new future opportunities for the city and its augmented citizen body.²⁰

All these important issues in the early history of Syracuse are only briefly covered by Herodotus because his interest is not on the growth of Syracuse as a city and military power. Instead, he devotes considerable coverage to one particular event because this illustrated contact between the mainland and the Sicilian Greeks, which is considered to have taken place in or shortly before 480 (Herodt. 7.145).²¹ A delegation representing the Hellenic League arrived at Syracuse and requested an interview with Gelon. This league or alliance of states on the mainland had recently been formed from the Peloponnesian League, which comprised Sparta and its nearest neighbours, and from Athens and other allies (mostly Aegean or Ionian islanders) intent on repelling the invasion of Greece by the Persian king Xerxes. The Greeks were led by envoys from Sparta and Athens, who appealed for Syracusan aid against the invaders.²² They highlighted the imminent threat to Greece and that Xerxes was about to bridge the Hellespont, lead his army against Athens and ultimately subject the entire region to his rule (Herodt. 7.157).²³ The speakers further acknowledged the wealth and power of Syracuse, which, if coupled with unity among the many Greek communities, would contribute to a common financial and military base that would be essential for withstanding the Persian incursion. They also pointed out that a failure to join a common cause might lead to defeat not only on the mainland of Greece but also in Sicily, for Xerxes' ambitions were considered boundless and his intention was world domination.

The rhetoric is bombastic and almost certainly designed to produce either a negative reaction or an act of submission. Gelon, the ruler of Syracuse and by then much of south-east Sicily, was provoked into an angry response and accused the delegates of a 'selfish' act (Herodt. 7.158) in that they came expecting aid but in the past had ignored his own requests for material help against his neighbours the Carthaginians. Herodotus has Gelon specifically connect this episode with the death of Dorieus the Spartan, who is claimed to have tried unsuccessfully

²⁰ However, since the number of citizens must have grown during the fifth century and later, there was evidently no need to follow Gelon's policy again.

²¹ Contacts based on trade must have been continuous, at least during the summer months, and travelling between Sicily and Greece for religious events such as the major games was also a regular feature. Political interaction must also have occurred regularly, but little note is made in the sources of such meetings, perhaps because they were a commonplace.

²² Herodotus, 7.157, does not name a single speaker at this point and instead makes the appeal a collective address.

²³ Mention that the Hellespont had yet to be bridged places this speech chronologically before late spring in 480.

to found a Greek settlement at Eryx.²⁴ In the process of attacking this town, which is more likely to have been held by Sicels than by Carthaginians, he was killed. This military action in western Sicily, which was the preserve of Carthage, may have caused a subsequent attack on the Greek cities in the east, but that event goes unrecorded except by implication in the words of Gelon. In return for aid from the Greeks, Gelon says that he promised to open certain 'emporía' or harbours, which would have brought a great deal of financial benefit to traders from the mainland *poleis*.²⁵ As a result of indifference to both Gelon's request or in taking revenge for the death of Dorieus, this western region of the island remained under the rule of the Carthaginians, even if the position of Syracuse was better than before. Now that the mainland was under threat from the Persians, the Sicilian Greeks were remembered and this brought the delegation to Syracuse. In spite of the Greeks' former lack of solidarity with their compatriots in Sicily, Gelon would not behave in such a blinkered fashion and was prepared to lend military aid. However, that his request had been ignored by the Greeks was evidently the basis for some leverage in obtaining concessions from the envoys in the event that he joined their alliance against Persia. He went on to state that he had at his disposal 200 triremes, 20,000 hoplite troops, 2,000 cavalry, 4,000 slingers and archers, and 2,000 light-armed troops, who accompanied the cavalry.²⁶ In what was clearly an unexpected twist in order for these forces to be released for use against the Persians, Gelon demanded overall personal command of any future campaign. Without this position, he would neither come himself nor send his troops to Greece.

Herodotus appears guilty of some obfuscation here, caused either by some inaccuracy in his source or his own error, when he states that Gelon maintained that he had requested military help against the Carthaginians at some date prior to the arrival of the delegates from the Hellenic League. The death of Dorieus must be tied quite closely to the capture and sack of Sybaris in about 510, since

²⁴ Herodotus shows that Eryx was a satellite town of Segesta and therefore not Carthaginian, although many of the communities of the west had alliances with their Punic neighbours.

²⁵ Herodotus is vague about the location of these harbours. He may mean the Punic settlements at Panormus, Solunto and Motya, since Segesta lies inland. But he may also mean the Greek harbours of the east, which charged harbour dues to traders.

²⁶ In Herodotus' account, Gelon promised to provide 200 triremes, which, when at sea, comprised crews totalling 40,000 and on top of that land forces totalling 28,000. But it is highly unlikely that Gelon could count on available manpower of nearly 70,000, even if this included mercenaries, slaves, foreign residents and allies. Moreover, to transport this army, ships and crews would be required in excess of the warships, which further extends the total manpower supposedly available to the ruler of Syracuse. Herodotus' figures are clearly exaggerated, but they are remarkably more in tune with the size of Syracuse and its military capability of the generation after he wrote.

it was said by Sybarite survivors of that episode (Herodt. 5.45) that the Spartan had fought on the side of the Crotoniates, who had been the victors in this conflict. Gelon was not the ruler of Syracuse or Gela at this time, however, and so either Gelon was misrepresenting his case or Herodotus has confused the chronology by as much as two decades. If the reference to Dorieus is incorrect, it must indicate one of two possibilities: Gelon was involved in some unattested war with Carthage during the earlier part of the 480s or Gelon's own victory at Himera should be re-dated to 479. Since the negotiations between the Greeks and the Syracusan tyrant took place in the spring of 480, a war with Carthage that had been concluded to Syracuse's advantage is not impossible. However, if account is taken of the fact that the main conquests of Gelon are minutely itemised by Herodotus, he would surely not have missed mentioning an earlier Syracusan victory over Punic neighbours. It therefore seems equally possible that what found its way into the narrative here is a jumbled memory of a request by Gelon for aid, which was not forthcoming from the cities in Greece, against a later Carthaginian invasion. If Gelon thought the Greeks were in a position to send him aid then that request should be dated after the battle of Salamis in 480 and indicate that the Carthaginian defeat at Himera occurred rather later in that year than the ancient sources assert.

The Spartan delegate was the first to reply to Gelon's ultimatum. The envoy, whose name is given as Syagrus, appears to have been outraged, reproaching the Syracusan leader for his *hubris*, which would have caused grief even to Agamemnon for the proposal that Spartans be led by the ruler of the Syracusans.²⁷ Syagrus, who may be a historical figure although he appears nowhere else, then tried to put Gelon in what he may have considered a rightful subordinate place. The case for command was dismissed out of hand, while it was indicated that the Syracusans should feel honoured to lend aid to the other Greeks under the leadership of Sparta. Gelon at once responded to this blunt rebuttal of his demand by taking a more conciliatory approach. He said that when harsh words were delivered they often caused an angry reply, but in his case he would not allow irrational feelings to intrude. And so Gelon put forward a compromise: seeing that the Spartans had such an emotional attachment to commanding the forces on land, even when the Syracusan force would be the largest single element in that army, he would relinquish his claim to be its senior commander. Instead, he suggested, he might command either the land or the sea forces, allowing the Spartans first choice of either. Gelon concluded by stating, that was his final position. Now the Athenian envoy, whose identity is not noted,

²⁷ Agamemnon the king of Mycenae was the leader of the expedition against Troy. His brother Menelaus, whose wife was Helen queen of Sparta, had invoked his aid in regaining her after she had eloped with Paris. Neither Agamemnon nor Menelaus was a Spartan, however.

intervened by rejecting Gelon's request to take command of the navy and is supposed to have stated that the Spartans had no interest in overseeing the fleet; but if they did show an inclination to take this command, the Athenians would defer to them alone and to no other Greek state. Moreover, he emphasised that the Syracusan claim to command the fleet was simply not credible because the number of Athenian warships and crews was the highest, while the credentials of the Athenians to command the ships was further reinforced by their ancient possession of Attica, which made them the longest inhabitants of Greece. The provocative rhetoric adopted by both Sparta and Athens and the intransigence displayed by the delegates clearly exasperated Gelon, who is said to have sent them away completely empty-handed but with a parting comment that captured not only the drama of the moment but also that to come. This comment was the creation either of Herodotus or of his source and unlikely to have been an authentic saying of the ruler of Syracuse:

'Athenian guest, you seem to me to have leaders but have none that follow. Because you will not yield anything but must have everything, do not delay but return as quickly as possible, telling Greece that spring has been taken from it.' The meaning was that the forces of Gelon were the most valued part of the Greek army and navy, just like the spring, and so without an alliance with Syracuse Greece had also lost its springtime. (Herodt. 7.162)

It is worth noting that the fleet of this Hellenic League was under the titular command of the Spartan Eurybiades, even if Themistocles the Athenian possessed effective control through Athens' contribution of 180 triremes (Herodt. 8.44).²⁸ This was, of course, less than the number promised by Gelon, but at that time the number of triremes available to the combined fleet cannot have been known with any precision and therefore the speech's construction plainly points to a much later date and tradition. Moreover, Syracuse's power

²⁸ Herodotus, 8.82, claims that the eventual total number of warships in the Greek fleet was 380, while earlier, 8.44, that the 180 Athenian triremes represented half the fleet. The 200 triremes Gelon is said to have possessed would therefore have made the Syracusan contribution the largest, and therefore justifies his indignation at the Greek lack of cooperation. The Athenians at Salamis were able to crew 180 triremes, which almost certainly represents their total available manpower excepting some citizens delegated to guarding the refugees at Troezen and Aegina. This would indicate a total figure for available Athenian manpower of roughly 36,000. Herodotus or his source with a total of more than double the Athenian figure therefore portrayed Syracuse as the strongest city of the Greeks, but this was surely inaccurate for 480. Diodorus, moreover, has increased the total figure for the available land forces alone by nearly double, and implies that Gelon was able to transport a significant number of these troops by ship either to Africa (Diod. 11.24.3) or to Greece (Diod. 11.26.4). However, there was neither an invasion of Africa nor aid to Greeks in the Peloponnese.

had only very recently been achieved by Gelon's victories over his neighbours in eastern Sicily. The implication that Syracuse was the longstanding senior city in Sicily is clearly a later interpretation based on the city's political and military position 50 years later.

The military power base ascribed to Gelon by Herodotus must surely be suspect not least because of Thucydides' evidence (4.25.1). He shows that in the 420s and later still Syracuse plainly did not possess the military infrastructure credited to Gelon's time as ruler.²⁹ And it was only during the tyranny of Dionysius after 405 that Syracuse actually achieved this level of military capability.³⁰ So where does the information emanate? The military powerbase of the Deinomenid tyranny may have become established as fact during the period of the rule of Gelon and his successor Hieron, although it must surely have been at a lesser level than is claimed for it by Herodotus. Possibly it became entrenched in early written accounts of Gelon's time, and this tradition was extracted by Herodotus either from such a source or was based on the observation of informants who knew Syracuse when the historian was composing his work. However, if the compositional phase of his work belongs to the 430s and 420s, the political and military situation in Syracuse would have been familiar to Herodotus, who would have seen that it not did truly reflect those he described.³¹ It is, of course, possible that Herodotus simply regarded the Syracuse of his day as a lesser power than the city of Gelon's rule, which would not therefore conflict with the material he presented to his audience. If the claim for such a formidable military position of Syracuse in 480 is open to considerable doubt then the interview and dismissal of the mainland Greek envoys by Gelon is at best questionably historical – and yet it certainly became a part of the historical tradition.³²

²⁹ Thucydides notes that the Syracusan fleet with allied support numbered just 30 triremes at the time of the first Athenian expedition to Sicily in 427. His later comments, 7.50, about the training needed to launch a fleet against the Athenian besiegers in 413, also illustrate a lack of competency in naval matters, strangely forgotten, it seems, from the time of Gelon. See further discussion in Chapter 6.

³⁰ The military figures attributed to Gelon look suspiciously like the army and navy of Dionysius I, who is said to have added 200 triremes in 399 to an existing fleet of just over 100 warships (Diod. 14.42.5), but who had an army of just 20,000 in 392 (Diod. 14.95.1). Diodorus (16.9.2) states that, although Dionysius II possessed 400 triremes, 100,000 infantry and 10,000 cavalry, he was still relieved of his rule of Syracuse by Dion, who led an army greatly inferior in size.

³¹ Clearly Herodotus makes no attempt to differentiate past greatness with Syracuse's military capability later.

³² The historicity of the episode was questioned by Treves (1941) 321–45 and refuted by Brunt (1993) 75–80. The text of Herodotus is not as straightforward as Brunt argued, and some elements of invention are clearly present yet these may have been obtained from

When the legation had sailed away, Gelon was apparently left in something of a quandary. On the one hand, he could not bring himself to go to the Peloponnese and place himself and his armed forces under the command of another Greek. On the other hand, in failing to join the Hellenic League he realised that the outcome of the coming war was certainly difficult to predict. When he learned that Xerxes had crossed the Hellespont (Herodt. 7.163), he sent a certain Cadmus, son of Scythes, with three pentekonteres, and entrusted his chosen lieutenant with a substantial treasure ('much money') and letters of friendship ('friendly letters') to Delphi.³³ Cadmus was instructed to remain at Delphi and observe how the military situation developed in Greece. If the 'barbarian' – Xerxes – was successful, Cadmus was instructed to deliver the money to the Persians and offer Gelon's submission to their rule.³⁴ If the Greeks obtained a victory over the invaders then the money and letters were to be returned to Gelon in Syracuse.³⁵ While one can fully understand Gelon's strategy, the episode clearly emanates from a tradition that attempted to denigrate Gelon as a Medizer and double-dealer. It is recorded nowhere else and probably belongs to the same negative perception of tyrants and kings as the portrayal of Alexander of Macedonia, who was an ally of Xerxes during the same war.³⁶

Syracusan sources in the 420s. On same-day synchronisation and disbelief in such phenomena in later antiquity, see Eunapius, frag. 1, Blockley (1983).

³³ Cadmus is described as a man from Cos and the son of Scythes. Herodotus, 7.164, again presents a rather confused tale, since Cadmus is supposed to have inherited the tyranny on Cos from his father yet surrendered this power and went instead to Sicily, where he obtained the leadership of the Samian community in Zancle just about the time that its name was changed to Messene by Anaxilas of Rhegium. However, whether he was the son of Scythes the previous ruler of Zancle is unclear, since that former 'ruler' had already gone into exile in Persia. It would certainly be unusual for father and son to rule the same town yet be living in opposite ends of the ancient Mediterranean World. It is perhaps more credible that Cadmus was governor of Messene for Anaxilas and that after the latter's death he had closer ties and an alliance with Syracuse.

³⁴ Herodotus, 7.163, notes that Cadmus was told to give the Persians soil and water as an indication that Gelon acknowledged Xerxes as his overlord.

³⁵ Herodotus, 7.164, notes that Gelon had chosen his emissary well, since, although Cadmus could so easily have stolen the money entrusted to him, he did in fact behave with impeccable honesty, returning to Syracuse after the battle of Plataea.

³⁶ Tyrants were not alone in hedging their bets in this conflict, as Herodotus, 7.168, shows. The Corcyraeans promised to join the Hellenic League and launched a fleet of 60 triremes, but this sailed no further than Pylos on the west coast of the Peloponnese; and the ships and their crews remained there in order to wait and see the outcome of the sea battle between the Greeks and Persians. The Corcyraeans claimed that they failed to join the Greek fleet at Salamis because of adverse winds at Cape Malea, but few at the time believed this excuse.

Herodotus (7.166–7) concludes his coverage of Sicilian affairs by including another episode, which he says he obtained from local sources, and this is the great victory of Gelon over Carthage at Himera on the northern coast of the island. This battle is said to have taken place on the same day as the Greek victory over the Persian fleet at Salamis. Hamilcar was said by Greek sources to have disappeared during the fighting and his body was never found. However, the Carthaginians told a different account, in which Hamilcar spent much of the battle making sacrifices in the hope of finding favourable omens for the battle. When he was told that his army had been routed, he threw himself into the sacrificial pyre and his body was utterly destroyed by the flames. Herodotus states that monuments were erected in his honour throughout the Carthaginian cities.

The historicity of the speeches delivered by the Spartan and Athenian delegates and Gelon, and indeed much of the narrative in Herodotus' account (7.153–67), must be suspect. Gelon's offer, after all, was vigorously rejected by the visiting envoys, who displayed outrage at the *hubris* of the Syracusan ruler. Yet according to Herodotus, Gelon was able to match the infantry and naval forces then available to the Greeks on the mainland, a claim that must seem at least to some extent untrustworthy. Indeed, the historian himself was not entirely convinced of the veracity of the information he had acquired from his Greek sources, as he states (7.167) in his preference for the Carthaginian account of the death of Hamilcar at Himera. Therefore, there is not only a great deal of obvious confusion and inconsistency in the text, but there is also the question of the synchronisation in the dating of the Greek victory over the Persians and of Gelon's victory over the Carthaginians at Himera.

That this synchronisation is forced can easily be seen when the evidence is taken into account and an alternate tradition emerges in Diodorus' account of Gelon's rule and victory at Himera. At the start of Book 11 of his history, Diodorus (11.1.4) claims that Xerxes sent an embassy to Carthage urging joint action against the Greeks. The Greeks on the mainland and in Sicily would therefore be caught in a pincer movement from east and south. The Carthaginians agreed to participate in this plan and began to make preparations for an invasion of Sicily, which was to be timed to occur just as Xerxes was entering Greece from the north. The plan, which was apparently formulated between the Persians and Carthaginians, looks highly unlikely to have any basis in fact and its precision appears dubious if merely because even in later periods the existence of complex military strategies only surfaces when they failed.³⁷ Herodotus, meanwhile, gives no clue that he is aware that such a plan had

³⁷ The pincer movement of the Cimbri and Teutones in their proposed invasion of Italy in 102/101 springs readily to mind as one such complicated strategy that, if historical, turned into a disaster for the invaders. On the invasion, see Evans (2013) 125–58.

been conceived or that the Syracusans knew of any impending invasion when the delegates from Athens and Sparta arrived for their interview with Gelon. However, Herodotus states instead that Gelon would have sent aid to the Greeks and even relinquished demands for a command, but that on account of treaties he had with Acragas and its ruler Theron, he became embroiled in a war with Carthage. Theron had expelled Terillus the ruler of Himera, who had gone to the Carthaginians in an attempt to win their aid to restore him to his former position; and it was this feud that brought Hamilcar to Sicily. Evidently he was to return Terillus to Himera and to gain as much territory for his own city in the meantime. Herodotus (7.165) also states that Hamilcar was encouraged in his campaign by Anaxilas of Rhegium.³⁸ And it was because of this unexpected turn of events that Gelon sent money to Delphi because he was no longer in a position to help the Greek with troops, although why these funds were not sent directly to the Greek commanders by then at the isthmus of Corinth or in Salamis is not explained by Herodotus. Moreover, Syracusan informants would have learned of Carthaginian preparatory moves sometime before the invaders made landfall in Sicily. And the notion of a combined attack is surely another synchronisation taken by Diodorus from a source that he does not name.³⁹ He provides specific information about the Carthaginian military capability and the composition of its armed forces as they were grouped in readiness for the invasion (Diod. 11.1.5). The Carthaginians were able, from their evident wealth, to employ mercenary troops from as far afield as Italy, Spain and Gaul, while they also assembled an army consisting of their own citizens and of Numidian tribes from the interior. The armed forces are alleged to have numbered 300,000 infantry and 200 warships.⁴⁰ The figure for the warships matches that claimed by

³⁸ Anaxilas was the son-in-law of Terillus, Herodot. 7.165. Anaxilas died in about 474, but even before then the new citizens of Messene, as shown on their coinage, had become independent. Diodorus shows no awareness of a tradition that is preserved only by Herodotus. The former may have found it in his source yet chose to ignore this for the more dramatic details of Hamilcar's invasion and death.

³⁹ Diodorus usually notes his sources frequently, but Book 11 has no such references, possibly because of the nature of the narrative that mostly covers Xerxes' invasion of Greece. Godley (1922) 478–9 considered the source used at the start of Book 11 to be Ephorus, although there is no evidence for this assumption and Diodorus' use of synchronised dating of both Greek and Roman magistrates rather suggests Timaeus. Marincola (1996) 592 ventures no further on the question of a source, other than to point out that this supposed coordination of attacks was a tradition later than Herodotus. That Diodorus' account was based on that of Timaeus, see Priestley (2014) 162–8, especially 168: 'Timaeus ... reworked Herodotus' narrative to glorify Sicily's history', but this reinterpretation had probably been accomplished already by Antiochus and Philistus.

⁴⁰ There is unanimity about the size of the Carthaginian invasion force of 300,000, which suggests that all later writers employed Herodotus' figure without much further

Gelon for his own fleet, but the total number of infantry is simply a fantasy to match the fabulous and equally unhistorical figures given by Herodotus (7.60: ‘one million seven hundred thousand’, cf. 7.184: ‘one million seven hundred thousand infantry plus eighty thousand cavalry’) for the Persian army. And this massive armament is reckoned to have taken three years to gather together, which is exactly the same period that Herodotus credits Persian preparation time prior to the bridging of the Hellespont.

Dating Cadmus’ visit to Delphi, for a Syracusan presence in this oracular site at this time, is problematic to say the least. Herodotus claims that Cadmus returned to Syracuse after the Greek won the decisive battle at Salamis and when Xerxes had left for Asia Minor. This can be dated to late summer 480, probably early September of that year. Cadmus was therefore in Greece when Herodotus states that Gelon with the cooperation of his ally Theron destroyed the invading forces of Carthage at Himera before these had even made any incursion into the interior of Sicily. Moreover, Cadmus must therefore have been in the vicinity of Delphi when it was attacked by a section of the Persian army sent by Xerxes after his victory at Thermopylae (Herodt. 8.34–9). Delphi is likely to have been taken by the Persians at this time and its miraculous escape from Persian occupation is a myth recounted as if historical by Herodotus, with no comment. Therefore, it is even plausible to argue that Cadmus had friendly contact with the Persians prior to their defeat at Salamis. Such diplomatic contact was later ‘forgotten’ in the historical tradition, which was unanimous in its admiration of Gelon, probably on account of his defeat of Carthage.

Indeed, it is this later tradition that is relayed by Diodorus in his history (11.20.1–26.7). His coverage of this Punic–Sicilian conflict is considerable and illustrates the significance attached to the affair in his sources. In restating the magnitude of the Carthaginian invasion force, already mentioned in the preface to Book 11, he accentuates the magnitude and importance of the war. Thus more than 300,000 troops embarked for Sicily in transport and cargo vessels numbering more than 3,000 with a supporting war fleet of more than 200. This immense armada was apparently caught in a storm after its departure from Carthage and the ships transporting the cavalry and chariots were all lost. Diodorus writes that, when he arrived at Panormus, Hamilcar declared that the war was finished since the stormy seas had not prevented the bulk of his army reaching safety and thereby granting a victory to the Sicilian Greeks. The

embellishment. This is interesting, since in other places the details diverge, but it may also indicate that a larger Carthaginian force would simply be unbelievable to the audience. While Xerxes might transport a huge army across the Hellespont by means of one or two bridges, a fleet carrying more than 300,000 troops could not seriously be imagined. In fact Xerxes’ army was probably in the region of 200,000, while Hamilcar’s force probably numbered less than 50,000. On the total numbers in the Persian army, see, for example, Marincola (1996) 590 and Evans (2015).

Carthaginian army was allowed just three days to recover from the crossing before Hamilcar advanced westwards to Himera. The distance involved no more than a march of 40 kilometres (25 miles), which cannot have taken longer than two to three days. The citizens of Himera were not unprepared and had evidently been forewarned of the enemy's intention quite some considerable time beforehand, since they had already summoned aid from Theron of Acragas. The Acragantine ruler had not only responded but had come in person to help repel the attackers.⁴¹ However, when the size of the invading force became apparent, and the Himeraeans were defeated in an engagement close to their city, they became unsure of their capacity to withstand this onslaught. So they immediately sent messengers to Syracuse requesting the aid of Gelon. Diodorus, or rather his source, appears to have been under the impression that Gelon was also well prepared for this invasion with his armed forces on standby. He is said to have ordered an immediate march and arrived close to Himera with 50,000 infantry and 5,000 cavalry.

There are notable difficulties with this narrative. These require some discussion, since some details given by the historian are just not feasible. Hamilcar is said to have allowed his army a three-day furlough before setting off to Himera, but an army of the size attributed to the Carthaginian general would have taken far longer than three days even to disembark and to be made ready for a military campaign. It would be reasonable to suppose that this army was billeted at Panormus for at least three weeks, since that time would have been essential before the Punic army was in a position to leave its base. Furthermore, the mercenaries who are said to have been recruited from Italy and further west are unlikely to have sailed from Carthage; and therefore the composite army, which was a feature of both Carthaginian and Sicilian Greek armies, probably came together only in Sicily, with further training and manoeuvres necessary before Hamilcar felt confident enough to begin his campaign. He moved his force along the coast, keeping his fleet at sea but sailing in tandem with the advance of the army. In the vicinity of Himera two camps were constructed, one for the army and the other for the fleet that was beached. The camps were fortified and connected; and in this way, the western approach to the city was sealed off. It seems, however, that even with so large a force, no attempt was made for a circumvallation of the town, an error for which the Carthaginians soon paid a high price.

Gelon was also able to construct a fortified camp near Himera, probably to the east of the city; and not only was he able to accomplish this unhampered by an enemy intervention, but he was also able to order out his own cavalry to attack the enemy's foraging parties. Diodorus (11.21.2) states that the

⁴¹ Himera had been annexed by Theron, one of whose sons, Thrasydaeus, acted as the governor there, although he was an unpopular choice, Diod. 11.48.6–8.

Carthaginians were taken completely by surprise and that 10,000, most probably camp followers and servants rather than troops, were taken as prisoners and brought into Himera. The capture of so many of the enemy in such a short time brought a much-needed psychological boost to the Himeraeans, while there was a decline in confidence among the invaders. Theron, who was in the city, had ordered many of the city's gates to be blocked in the event that their fortifications came under attack, but Gelon instructed that these be unblocked and ordered more gaps to be constructed in the walls in order to allow for ease of exit in preparation for making sorties against the enemy. Gelon's leadership inspired great confidence among the Greeks; and, as Diodorus notes, like any good general he searched for a means to win a victory without excessive losses to his own army and those of his allies. He had decided that to defeat the Carthaginians their fleet must first be destroyed, for without naval support the enemy would be at immediate disadvantage because of dependence on supplies being brought in by sea.⁴² However, just when Hamilcar was attending to sacrifices to Poseidon in the naval camp, some cavalry of Gelon intercepted and detained a messenger from Selinous. He was bringing news to Hamilcar that cavalry reinforcements he had ordered from the citizens of this city would arrive on the day that had been arranged (Diod. 11.21.4–5).⁴³ On that particular day, Gelon sent out his own cavalry with instructions to approach the enemy camp and act as if they were Selinuntines. Since the Greeks all wore similar armour and used identical weaponry, and since the Carthaginian army was composed of many different ethnic groups, Gelon's cavalry detachment easily gained admission. Once inside the camp

⁴² Diodorus does not mention this, but if the Punic army was large then the surrounding area would not provide sufficient supplies. Since the fleet is said to have accompanied the army, this suggests that the logistics of supplying his troops was a problem for Hamilcar, but it is worth noting that this was precisely the same problem faced by the Persians. Gelon's strategy therefore copied that of Themistocles at exactly the same time. This would appear to be a later construct perhaps by the Syracusan Antiochus, wishing to illustrate the genius of Gelon and to show that it was comparable to anything devised by the mainland Greeks.

⁴³ The position, both geographical and political, of Selinous is worth some comment. Established by settlers from Megara Hyblaea, the community grew to become a well-populated harbour town with a population perhaps in excess of 20,000, and was the largest *polis* of the Greeks in the west of Sicily. However, its history alternated from independence to being a dependent ally of Carthage. It may have been allied to the Carthaginians at this time and was later the place of exile for Hamilcar's family, but the city was destroyed in 409 by Hamilcar's son Hannibal. Thereafter the site was reoccupied but to a much lesser extent; and it seems to have become a Punic garrison guarding the overland approaches to Lilybaeum, the Carthaginian stronghold, from the east. For the most comprehensive and recent study of Selinous, see De Angelis (2003) 101–99. For the siege of Selinous in 409, see Evans (2013) 91–6.

these horsemen made directly for Hamilcar, who was engaged in sacrificial duties, and killed the Carthaginian general. Once that deed was accomplished, the cavalry then turned their attention to the warships beached close by, and somehow managed to torch a sufficient number of these for a major blaze to begin.⁴⁴ The smoke from the burning ships was the signal for Gelon to order his army to advance against the enemy camp. The Carthaginians do not appear to have realised that they had lost their general nor that their fleet had been attacked, for there were evidently other commanders with the commensurate authority to muster and galvanise their troops and lead them out of the camp to face the Greeks.⁴⁵ At the sound of horns, the two sides advanced with cheering and shouting until their infantry lines came into contact. Then the fighting at close quarters was evenly balanced and the battle continued for some time, but when news circulated that Hamilcar was dead, coupled with the sight of smoke and flames rising from the beached Punic fleet, the Carthaginian troops began to lose momentum, while their opponents, sensing victory in their grasp, doubled their efforts. The Carthaginian line began to crumble and a rout began as the enemy troops sought safety in flight. As a result of one lightning strike by Gelon's cavalry, the besiegers had been thrown into confusion and now fell victim to the order that no prisoners were to be taken. Some, if not many, must surely have escaped along the coast to Panormus, but Diodorus stresses rather the number killed and reports that many were also taken and enslaved, presumably both soldiers and camp followers. Diodorus (11.22.4) states that, of the Carthaginians, 150,000 were killed in this catastrophe. However, the details that are provided about this battle are purely generic in character and can apply to most descriptions of engagements. The account concludes with a lengthy eulogy of Gelon and praise of his ability as a general – although it seems hardly warranted, even if the historian's claim is true, that his strategy was unique. Firing the enemy ships would have been attempted as a regular tactic where any army was accompanied by its fleet, and killing the enemy general before the battle began was more a fortuitous event than the result of a well-designed strategy. The claim that Gelon killed and captured more of his enemy than anyone before him had done is one without any solid foundation in fact. On the whole, this section appears to be derived from the sort of dramatic sentiments from Timaeus. Diodorus' account of course makes little sense and is presented as a series of snapshots yet in a wholly unhistorical fashion. It is true that the loss of a general might

⁴⁴ They may then have escaped or were simply killed after they had served their general well. Diodorus fails to complete the account of this episode.

⁴⁵ In a composite army, with its many different ethnic sections, individual commanders known to their troops played a fundamental role, whereas in later armies of the Romans, for example, the homogenous nature of the forces made the presence of the general more necessary.

result in a rupture in the chain of command, but this does not initially appear to have had much effect on morale. Moreover, the fate of the fleet was not a crucial factor in the events, since it was not the means of escape for the army that had marched along the coast, while the Greeks appear to have had no war fleet of any substance in the vicinity to intercept the enemy should any of their ships put to sea. This is surprising to say the least, given that Herodotus pointedly emphasised the naval power of Syracuse, and that Gelon, praised as the consummate general (Diod. 11.22.5), seems to have ignored entirely the need for naval support in a war against an enemy that was essentially a naval power. Some of the Carthaginian ships must have made their way back to their home ports, while elements of the army will also have retreated to Panormus.⁴⁶ The greatest number of casualties probably consisted of the non-combatants who moved with all ancient armies.

The problem with Herodotus' dating is that the battle at Himera is placed so late in the year, whereas tactically it made sounder sense for the Carthaginians to have made for the island earlier in the campaigning season. They had no reason to know that Xerxes' advance – if they were in alliance with him – was delayed by the destruction of the first bridge over the Hellespont, the size of his army and the unexpected delay at Thermopylae. Xerxes reached Attica in August at the end of a busy campaigning season and Salamis is dated to the second half of September. The Carthaginians, however, in order to secure their invasion bridgehead and make advances inland, must have beached at Panormus (Diod. 11.20.2), their chief Sicilian harbour, and then Himera much earlier than August for their campaign to make any sense. Similarly, Gelon cannot have rushed across the island in a matter of days to tackle the Punic invasion. Ancient armies before the advent of the professional forces were never on a permanent alert and it was actually quite difficult to maintain discipline among fellow citizens, as Thucydides plainly shows (6.67), even when troops had been drawn up for battle.⁴⁷ Thus while a tyrant might keep his personal bodyguard on high alert in fear of any attempted coup against

⁴⁶ Just 20 Carthaginian vessels are said to have escaped from Himera, Diod. 11.24.2, but Diodorus reports that these all sank in a storm since they were overfull having collected a large number of those escaping from the battle. Just a small boat with survivors arrived in Carthage. Diodorus does not explain why the ships did not make for Panormus. The tale does allow for some dramatic embellishment, with the comment, 'all crossing to Sicily were lost.'

⁴⁷ When the Syracusans were in their lines, facing the Athenians, who had recently arrived at Dascon in the Great Harbour (see Figure 2.1), some of the hoplites went off for their lunch in the city. Not surprisingly this was observed by Nicias the Athenian general, who ordered his troops to advance and engage while the Syracusan line was depleted; the latter were put to flight even after their fellow citizens had hurried back to join their units, Thuc. 6.67–72. For further details, see Chapter 6.



Figure 2.1 The Island from Epipolai. Note the distinctive ‘kidney-shaped’ bay, which became the Great Harbour. See also Map 3.

him, it was simply impracticable for a state’s army when that included using part-time troops, which comprised the greater part of the ranks. The Syracusan mobilisation must therefore have taken at the very least some days, even weeks cannot be ruled out, before Gelon was able to lead such a huge army out from his city accompanied by its even more cumbersome baggage and supply train. From Syracuse to Himera via Enna in the centre of the island is approximately 225 kilometres (140 miles). Gelon’s army, with its camp followers, is likely to have taken about two weeks to cover this distance. And so this should indicate that the relief column from Syracuse probably arrived about one month after it was requested by the leaders of the Himeraeans. In that time, Hamilcar appears not to have made any progress against the besieged and their allies other than blockading the city from the west yet making no attempt to isolate the defenders or indeed to prepare his army for any counterattack by the Greeks, about whose advance he must have had reports.

The battle of Himera occurred sometime during the summer of 480, and that date perhaps is not to be doubted, but its synchronisation with Thermopylae or Salamis was the creation of later writers. The timeline must be something along the following lines:

480

April	The Greek envoys are in Syracuse
May	Hamilcar's expedition arrives at the Punic settlement of Panormus
June	Himera is besieged
July	Gelon responds by leading an army across Sicily to relieve his fellow Greeks in the city
August	Hamilcar is defeated on the same day as Thermopylae, Diodorus (11.24.1)
<i>or</i>	
September	Hamilcar is defeated on the same day as Salamis, Herodotus (7.166)

No greater precision is possible given the nature of the evidence. Herodotus makes no mention of Gelon making preparations for military action of any kind, when an impending invasion on the scale claimed would certainly have been reported to Syracuse in just the same way as the mainland Greeks were fully aware of Xerxes' activities at the Hellespont. Gelon said he was in a position to aid the Greeks with the large forces at his disposal as if he was prepared for any military event. But he would not be in a position to send forces if he knew that the Carthaginians were about to launch their invasion of Sicily. He was probably not in a position to send forces to Greece without substantial preparation time. All in all, the episode remains suspect. Gelon's offer to the Greeks of an army and navy does not mean that there had been a mobilisation of these troops, but rather that he could summon the numbers he claimed to control both from Syracuse and from allies and mercenaries.⁴⁸ The composite nature of the armies in Sicily meant that detachments consisting of mercenary troops were employed from probably a very early stage in the history of the Greeks on the Island. Syracuse was no exception to this trend, especially when the composite nature of the city's population is taken into account.

The extent of the threat from Carthage looks very much as if it was exaggerated in later accounts and the numbers in Hamilcar's invasion force seem to have been deliberately inflated to match the Persian incursion into Greece. So the argument of Treves (1941) was quite reasonable inasmuch as the details presented by Herodotus about Gelon and the Greek delegates do not add up to a true historical account. The counterargument of Brunt (1993) is therefore too severe with regard to his apparent belief in the minutiae of the text, the details

⁴⁸ Parke (1933) 11 suggested that Gelon might have had up to 15,000 mercenaries, but there is no evidence for this figure for that time.

of which cannot ever have been known either to Herodotus or to his source. The meeting between Gelon and a Greek delegation could have taken place, but the details filling up the narrative do not belong to that date and are plainly the sorts of comments that later historians might have thought suitable and apposite; but they are not history. While Herodotus places the Carthaginian defeat at the same time as the battle of Salamis, hence September 480, according to Diodorus Gelon's victory occurred at the same time as Xerxes' army forced its way through the pass at Thermopylae, which was in early- to mid-August. However, it should be noted that Diodorus' account of the battle at Himera is actually placed in the narrative between the battle of Salamis in 480 and the Greek victory over Mardonius at Plataea in the following summer, although it is dated under the year 480. Moreover, Diodorus (11.23.1) makes the point, 'many writers compare Gelon's victory with the battle at Plataea fought by the Greeks', and goes further to write that the Syracusan tyrant's strategy was considered by some more ingenious than that of Themistocles. Themistocles, however, is not recorded as having a major role in the strategy in the campaign to Plataea but for the earlier naval battles at Artemisium and Salamis. Diodorus has quite possibly misinterpreted his source, as he elaborates on this theme not by analysing the tactics but by reviewing the more generally held perceptions of the time. The victory of Gelon inspired the Greeks to defeat Xerxes. Gelon's victory was accomplished with the total destruction of his enemy; the Persian defeat at Plataea, however, does not appear equated with this episode in Sicily but rather with the return of Xerxes and many of his followers to Asia. The comparison is confusing, since Xerxes returned to Asia after Salamis but Mardonius the Persian general at Plataea was also killed along with a sizeable portion of his army. The comparison should therefore have been between Himera and Plataea. Gelon earned universal praise for his victory, but both Pausanias and Themistocles were condemned by their fellow citizens, Pausanias commander of the Hellenic League army at Plataea for corruption and Themistocles ostracised for *hubris* (Diod. 11.23.3). The comparison is once again flawed, although Gelon is described by Diodorus as having the affection of the citizens of Syracuse as he grew old and that on account of their respect for their ruler the Syracusans were happy to see his family maintain the position of authority in the *polis*.⁴⁹

The chronological proximity of Gelon's defeat of the Carthaginians and the Greek victory at Salamis makes the details of the war in Sicily highly questionable. A Syracusan historian would have wanted to enhance the history of the city at this early stage in its growth. For example, the historian would note Gelon's generosity in rewarding not only the cavalymen responsible for the

⁴⁹ There is no way of telling whether the rather garbled nature of this section derives from Diodorus' clumsy editing or from the source. An earlier source, depending on its origin, ought to have been more accurate and trustworthy.

death of Hamilcar who had evidently escaped unharmed, but also all troops who had fought bravely on the battlefield. The temples at Himera were decorated with some of the plunder taken from the enemy, while Gelon's allies, especially the Acragantines, received a fair share of both looted goods and slaves (Diod. 11.25.1–2).⁵⁰ The major portion, however, was reserved for transportation to Syracuse to decorate the temples there.

When the news of the debacle and Hamilcar's death in Sicily reached Carthage (Diod. 11.24.3), the city mourned its dead and was placed on full alert in case Gelon should decide to launch an invasion of Africa.⁵¹ To prevent this threat becoming real, a delegation of its most distinguished citizens was despatched to Syracuse to discuss terms of a peace settlement. When these envoys arrived they expected to be treated harshly, but instead Gelon gave very lenient terms: that the Carthaginians be responsible for the erection of two temples in which records of their peace agreement should be held, and that they pay to Syracuse the sum of 2,000 talents in silver, which was deemed to have been the cost of the war.⁵² The Punic envoys were so grateful for the unexpected generosity that they also gave as a present to Damarete, wife of Gelon, who is said to have interceded on their behalf, a crown 100 gold talents in weight. Diodorus states (11.25.3) that she had the crown melted down and instead issued a gold coinage, each of which was worth an Attic decadrachm and was called a *pentekontelitron* or a 50-*litra* coin.⁵³ In the city itself, Diodorus reports (11.26.7) that Gelon was acclaimed *euergetes* and *soter* and *basileus* and later ordered the building of temples to Demeter and Chorē (Persephone).⁵⁴ Moreover, he ordered the

⁵⁰ Theron is portrayed as a rather timid ruler, but he did very well from the victory, especially in the number of slaves he received, with whom he was able to begin the building of a temple of the Olympian Zeus, the largest temple ever constructed by the Greeks, and other amenities for his city such as an underground water supply, a public park and a decorative lake, Diod. 11.25.3–4.

⁵¹ This is plainly a doublet with the actual invasion and campaigns in Africa of Agathocles between 315 and 311 BC. For discussion of Agathocles' activities, see Evans (2009) 128–34.

⁵² Diodorus, 11.25.2, does not record to which deities these temples were constructed or where they were situated, but shrines to Eirene (Peace) or Nemesis (Retribution) are certainly possible.

⁵³ For a more detailed discussion of this coin issue called the *Damareteion* and its more likely date, see Appendix 4.

⁵⁴ Two shrines occupying a single *temenos* is most likely, situated outside the city walls at Achradina, but the site has never been identified, although it was probably situated in Neapolis close to the *temenos* of Apollo and the Hellenistic theatre, Evans (2009) 48 n. 3. See Map 3. Strangely Diodorus has nothing to say about the existing temples, which must have been adorned with the spoils from the conflict, and especially omits to note that the temple of Athena on the Island was begun at this time. Diodorus relates a tale (8.11.1–2) about an architect of a temple of Athena who was convicted of embezzling funds allocated to its

construction of a tripod worth 16 gold talents, which he had erected at Delphi in honour of Apollo.⁵⁵ The dramatic and religious aspect of the entire episode should not go unnoticed, while the prominence of Poseidon appears to be some form of construct. It seems unlikely that a general would spend all his time in his camp ignoring military developments, leaving any tactics for battle in the hands of subordinates. The notice about Poseidon further reduces the historical base of the narrative, since it must presumably be connected with Hamilcar's safe arrival at Panormus where the appropriate sacrifices would already have been offered. The death of Hamilcar beside the beach, killed by horsemen, may also be related to the tale told in Euripides' tragedy *Hippolyta*, in which the lover of Hippolyta was killed on the beach by a raging bull sent by Poseidon. Inevitably the comparison is not exact, but once again it would be the product of the skilled writer of the Hellenistic period who would expect his knowledgeable audience to be alert to allusions to other literary episodes.

Gelon is said to have dismissed his bodyguard after Himera, which probably indicates that he did not hire a large number of mercenary troops on a permanent basis and that he relied on his supporters from Gela. This assumption would allow for a considerable reinterpretation of Diodorus' passage (11.26.5–6) where the historian recounts that when Gelon heard that Xerxes had been defeated by the Greeks at Salamis, and considering that the threat of occupation of the mainland had now receded, he decided not to send troops to the Peloponnese as he had planned. Instead, he summoned his troops to a muster, either in the agora or in the fields in Lysimeleia outside Achradina.⁵⁶ Gelon appeared unexpectedly, wearing no armour and carrying no weapon but in civilian clothes and without any personal guards. He went on to deliver a speech in which he outlined the achievements of his rule, which was greeted with great enthusiasm, especially for the fact that he was confident enough of his own position and reputation to speak while taking no precautions for his safety.⁵⁷ Instead, Gelon was cheered

construction, and this episode may date to Gelon's rule, Evans (2009) 52 n. 15. The historian also adds the information that Gelon intended to dedicate a temple to Demeter at Aetna but this project remained unfulfilled because death intervened. This information was probably included since Diodorus' place of birth Agyrium was nearby.

⁵⁵ An inscription from Delphi records the erection of this and probably three other tripods dedicated by Gelon and his three brothers Hieron, Polyzelus and Thrasybulus, Schol. Pindar, *Pyth.* 1.152. Note that the figure on the inscriptions, 50 talents and 100 *litra*, represents the total for all tripods, while Diodorus' figure relates to Gelon's votive offering alone.

⁵⁶ Note that Thucydides, 6.97.2, states that the Syracusan army mustered in the fields of Lysimeleia for inspection by their generals just prior to the arrival of the Greeks at Leon to the north of Epipolai in April/May 413. This was probably a regular place for supervising the gathering of the armed forces. See further discussion in Chapter 6.

⁵⁷ Such a detailed episode was probably not available to any historian who covered this period of Syracuse's history and it is not mentioned by Herodotus. However, it is reminiscent

and acclaimed the founder and benefactor of the city. If Gelon did not possess a considerable guard of mercenaries then he must have relied principally on those supporters closest to his family, namely the Geloan element in the city. It is certainly plausible to suggest, therefore, that this muster of troops did not include those citizens who might possibly be less enthusiastic about his rule, namely the Syracusans, whom he had excluded from power. Indeed, the muster of troops was probably made up predominantly of Geloans rather than a broad cross-section of the city populace; and so Gelon would have been greeted with much affection and would have felt no need to have a guard protect his person. Diodorus was undoubtedly misled by his source, who wanted to portray Gelon as the new founder of Syracuse; this, of course, he was in one sense, but certainly not in promoting harmony among the citizen body overall.

Gelon died soon afterwards. Again, there is apparent evidence for an illustration of great respect to the deceased ruler, but there remains the suspicion that this regret was mainly from the Geloans, perhaps for a brief time uncertain of the future, rather than a widespread outpouring of grief. Diodorus (11.26.7) is clearly excerpting from one source here, since his mention of Gelon's death is brief and unexceptional and dated under the year 479: 'by fate in the prime of his life he was taken away.' The implication in the text is surely that his death was unexpected, and that he was in his forties or early fifties and certainly not an elderly individual.⁵⁸ This notice is quite stark in comparison to the detail with which he then goes on to relate under the year 478 (11.38.2–6), which is generally regarded as the year Gelon died. It is possible that the original source – Antiochus, Philistus or Ephorus – treated Gelon's death three times in their narrative and that Diodorus faithfully reports each one, but it is perhaps more understandable to see the historian moving between his sources, recounting each and including the most elaborate account without altering his own text.⁵⁹ So contrary to what Diodorus claims in a glowing eulogy of the Syracusan tyrant, where Gelon is allowed a long and honoured old age before death, it transpires that Gelon died within a matter of months of his success at Himera. Arguably there was insufficient time for his popularity to wane; and although there is no

of the Roman consul and dictator Lucius Cornelius Sulla, who also gave up all positions of power in January 79 and retired from public life without considering it necessary to take any safeguards for his future safety. Like Gelon, he died within a short time of his victory, in his case after a Roman civil war in 84–82, in 78. Interestingly, his death was exactly 400 years after that of Gelon. Such similarities in the end of their careers may well have made the later Roman the basis for details, which were then applied by writers of the first century to the earlier ruler of Syracuse.

⁵⁸ There is much notice of his wife Damarete: Simonides, frag. 106; Pindar, *Pythian Ode*, 1.152; Diod. 11.26.3. However, there is no mention of any children.

⁵⁹ Two or three sources are present here and Diodorus reiterates each without combining the information into a more finished narrative.

mention of intrigue, it is certainly possible that he was the victim of a palace coup, which resulted in his brother Hieron acquiring the rule of Syracuse.

The fullest version of Gelon's death (Diod. 11.38.2–4) does not say that he died in the prime of his life, but that he died as the result of an illness and that before his death he signified that his brother Hieron, who was closest to him in age, should become his successor.⁶⁰ The Syracusan citizen body had previously voted – the time is not provided, although it appears to pre-date Gelon's rule – that expensive funerals should be banned, a law never reversed by Gelon, and he left instructions that his funeral should not exceed the legal modest amount. Such an item of legislation might belong to an earlier period when the community lacked wealth, but it might also belong to an account of a native Syracuse writer wanting to emphasise the stricter morality of ancient times and the absence of conspicuous consumption, arguably a widespread trend of a later and less religious age. Hieron followed his brother's wishes and the remains of the former ruler were escorted to his final resting place by the citizens of the community.⁶¹

The chosen resting place of Gelon was in an estate that was owned by his wife – presumably Damarete – and situated 200 stadia from the city. This translates to a distance of approximately 37 kilometres or 23 miles. In which direction this estate was situated is not stated by Diodorus (11.38.4); and since the city controlled the Megarian Plain 40 kilometres to the north and the entire south-east of Sicily to Gela and beyond, its location is probably beyond hope of recovery. Since Diodorus claims that a hero's shrine was erected, which was destroyed by the Carthaginians in one of their sieges of Syracuse, it is generally considered that Gelon's tomb was situated to the south somewhere in the vicinity of Elorus.⁶² In keeping with his coverage of many events, the details are sacrificed

⁶⁰ There were at least four brothers: Polyzelus and Thrasybulus were the youngest, and there was also a sister, who was the wife of Theron (see the stemma below). Gelon and Hieron are credited with sons both named Deinomenes (see Chapter 3). The existence of a prominent Syracusan named Deinomenes in the Second Punic War, Livy, 24.7.4 (one of the conspirators against Hieronymus), may perhaps indicate that some branch of the family survived and remained in Syracuse for more than 250 years afterwards.

⁶¹ Diodorus, 11.38.4, states that 'the body' (σῶμα) was accompanied by the citizens. Usual Greek burial practice was cremation rather than interment of the body. The cremation would therefore appear to have occurred at the place of burial.

⁶² A site adjacent to the Elorus archaeological zone close to Noto is popularly pointed out as the tomb of Gelon. It is in the estate of Nine Towers, one of which is standing. However, whether there is any basis for considering this to be the *Heroon* of the Syracusan ruler is to be doubted. The Carthaginians invaded the territory of Syracuse on two occasions, in 396 and in 317. Diodorus, 14.63.1–3, indicates that it was during this first attack that the tomb was destroyed along with many others, but this must also mean that this tomb was situated between Achradina and Polichne and near the temple of Zeus, which conflicts with the information that the tomb was 200 stadia from the city and hence a much further distance

and instead a homily on Gelon's deserved glory is added, with the assertion that, whereas those unworthy of distinction may be denigrated, those who achieved great heights should acquire perpetual admiration. Diodorus ends his coverage of Gelon by noting that he ruled for seven years, while his successor was ruler for eleven years and eight months, a detail that may have its origin in a Syracusan chronographer, so precise is the information.

To sum up Gelon's rule and achievements: the battle at Himera and its consequences for Sicily are not to be found anywhere in the earliest extant source, Herodotus, although it was recorded soon after it took place. Herodotus must have known the later history of the Deinomenid tyranny, but it lay outside his subject. Thucydides (6.4–5) mentions Gelon briefly, but he too had a focus that precluded much analysis. We are therefore left with Diodorus, who provides sometimes essential details and sometimes utterly extraneous material. However, he would surely have obtained all this material from the earliest recorders of Syracusan history, Antiochus and Philistus, probably through his usual sources Ephorus and Timaeus. Gelon's rule witnessed a surge in Syracusan power and the extent of his control in Sicily can be illustrated simply by noting that, while Gelon lived in Syracuse, his brother Hieron governed Gela and it is likely that other family members and close supporters held similar gubernatorial positions in other centres such as Elorus, Catane and Leontini. But Gelon was ambitious for conquests outside Sicily and may well have set his sights on controlling the Straits by establishing a new harbour at Hipponium, which would have nullified the power of Rhegium and Messene.⁶³ Gelon's military powerbase was impressive and substantial, but its nature is only revealed from the military activities that took place during Hieron rule, which were more extensive geographically and more professionally based. The memory of Gelon as a singular ruler of virtue and compassion is therefore likely to have been a construct that sought to place this tyrant on the same level as the earlier rulers of the same title in mainland Greece and Ionia, such as Cypselus in Corinth or even Solon of Athens. However, in real terms, Gelon's Syracuse was not more formidable than the major cities on the mainland, in Ionia or in Magna Graecia. Its real growth came later.

Hieron

Hieron appears to have taken control of Greater Syracuse without opposition and enjoyed for some time the popularity of his brother. Diodorus has no

away. In all likelihood, Gelon's tomb was 20 stadia from the city or about 4 kilometres (less than 3 miles). The towers, states Diodorus, 11.38.5, were dismantled by a jealous Agathocles, ruler of Syracuse from 317 until 289. There is clear uncertainty in Diodorus' account.

⁶³ For Gelon's interest in Hipponium, see Ath. *Deip.* 12.542; Evans (2009) 109.

record of any event in the city for two years, until the narrative picks up events in 476 (Diod. 11.48.2–3), the year in which Anaxilas died. Hieron at that time, after perhaps two years of rule, became aware that his brother Polyzelus was a more popular figure and therefore began to view his sibling as a threat to his position. Polyzelus was clearly at Syracuse at this time, while the fourth brother, Thrasybulus, was governing Gela. In order to ensure his own safety, Hieron began to hire mercenaries and instituted a permanent bodyguard. It seemed that his designs would prove effective, since events occurred in southern Italy that appeared to offer Hieron a way of disposing of Polyzelus (Diod. 11.48.4). Sybaris was being besieged by its neighbour Croton and appealed for aid from Syracuse. Hieron responded positively and began to enlist forces for an expedition, which he placed under the command of Polyzelus. Diodorus states that, although ‘many soldiers’ were recruited, the actual intention was that these would be defeated and that their general would be killed. It seems more likely that Hieron ordered his brother to take command and had authorised the muster of a poorly trained or disorganised force and Polyzelus saw through the trickery and that he was to be the victim. Polyzelus refused to take any part in this campaign, which naturally angered his brother; thus he immediately fled from Syracuse to Acragas, where he put himself under the protection of his brother-in-law Theron.⁶⁴ Theron had problems of his own and probably did not relish becoming involved in the internal squabbles of the dominant Syracusan family. His son Thrasydaeus, following the practice of the Deinomenids of having family members constantly present in the major centres in order to reduce the risk of rebellion, ruled in Himera. However, the citizens of Himera were unhappy with Thrasydaeus; and rather than send complaints about him directly to Theron, whom they believed would side with his son, they instead sent envoys to Hieron. These delegates offered to turn Himera over to Syracusan rule if Hieron was to oust Thrasydaeus. By the time this embassy arrived in Syracuse, Hieron had clearly had second thoughts about eliminating Polyzelus and had reached the conclusion that peace in the family and with neighbouring Acragas was much more to his advantage than initiating a new period of uncertainty and warfare. It is also possible that by then Hieron had his sights on greater gains elsewhere. An expedition to aid Sybaris in about 476 is dated very closely to Hieron’s victory over the Etruscans dated to 474, and the two may well be connected. Therefore, Hieron denounced the legates to Theron, who took immediate action to save his son and to execute any Himeraeans he considered to be a danger to Acragantine rule in that city. Polyzelus, in the meantime, seems to have returned to Syracuse;

⁶⁴ The campaign to relieve Sybaris is forgotten by Diodorus, 11.48.4, but another tradition placed Polyzelus at Sybaris, where he successfully drove back the Crotoniate invaders, Evans (2013) 9.



Figure 2.2 The tomb of Theron, tyrant of Acragas, who died in 473/2 (Diod. 11.53.1), with the temple of Heracles in the background.

and any rivalry between him and Hieron was resolved, or at least a further rift was averted.⁶⁵

However, the death of the popular Theron soon after the ‘Polyzelus episode’ in 473/2 brought the return of his son Thrasydaeus (Diod. 11.53.1).⁶⁶ Thrasydaeus is portrayed as lacking his father’s skill and character; and, says Diodorus, he ruled like a tyrant, forfeiting the goodwill of the people.⁶⁷ That behaviour still did not prevent the new ruler of Acragas from deciding to undertake a campaign against Syracuse. He raised an army by hiring mercenaries and levying troops from both of his cities, collecting 20,000 infantry and cavalry. Hieron was

⁶⁵ Polyzelus is not noted again by Diodorus or any other source. He must have died before Hieron, since Thrasybulus, who was probably the youngest of the brothers, succeeded in 467. An estate near the Cacyparis River about 20 kilometres (12 miles) south of Syracuse may have been associated with this Polyzelus, Evans (2013) 77–8.

⁶⁶ Theron had ruled since 489/8, Anaxilas from 494/3 to 476/5. For the tomb of Theron, see Figure 2.2.

⁶⁷ Tyranny itself had a neutral connotation, but ruling like a tyrant was contrasted with ruling like a king, the latter a good characteristic, the former bad.

alert to this threat to his territory and responded in kind: a battle was fought probably on the border between the two states. The Syracusans were victorious after a fierce encounter in which they lost 2,000 of their army, half the number suffered by the defeated Acragantines. As a result, Thrasydaeus was deposed and went into exile, leaving a new government of the *demos* to sue for peace, which Hieron, now supreme in Sicily, was happy to grant.⁶⁸

Shortly beforehand, Etruscan ambitions of expanding their influence into southern Latium and northern Campania at a time when the Sybarite-founded centres at Posidonia, Laos and Scidrus were without the military backing of their metropolis may well have drawn Hieron north. The divergent tradition about the aid granted to Sybaris allows for a more favourable interpretation of the sources than of infighting in the ruling family. Instead, Polyzelus may well have led an expedition that was successful against Croton and removed the threat to Sybaris. However, by then Sybaris possessed much less influence in the region than it had commanded a generation before. With its satellite communities along the Tyrrhenian Sea under pressure from the Etruscans, it seems reasonable to suppose that, having called on the aid of Syracuse against Croton, it should do this again. The proximity of the events is highly suggestive.

Diodorus (11.51.1) states that it was the Cumaeans who sent a request to Hieron for help against Etruscan aggression in 474, but the citizens of Posidonia, Laos and Scidrus would also have been anxiously watching matters unfolding immediately to their north. A large naval force was sent, although these warships may not all have originated in Syracuse, being based rather at Hipponium if this had remained in Syracusan hands after the death of Gelon. Diodorus is under the impression that there was more than a single commander, which suggests not only that Hieron did not go in person but also that this fleet was a composite force made up of Syracusan and allied vessels. These allies would come from as far afield as Gela, even Acragas, but also include Cumaeans and probably contingents from the other Greek settlements along the coast north of Hipponium. Diodorus certainly gives an indication that the Syracusans joined other forces that had been assembled in the vicinity of Cumae.⁶⁹ A great sea battle followed in which the Etruscans were defeated and suffered severe losses (Diod. 11.51.2); and, indeed, Etruscan aspirations of a southerly expansion in their rule were so severely dented that their power and influence rapidly waned in a process accelerated by the growing might of Rome. Diodorus states that after this resounding victory the Syracusan fleet returned to its home, but Strabo (5.4.9) notes that Hieron established a garrison on Ischia, the island opposite

⁶⁸ Thrasydaeus went to Megara on the Greek Mainland, where he was executed perhaps for being involved in some civil unrest, Diod. 11.53.5.

⁶⁹ Other towns with naval capability along this stretch of the Italian coastline included Neapolis and Elea.

Cumae. If this statement is accurate, it might suggest that either the Cumaeans asked for further protection in the event of an Etruscan counterattack or that the Syracusan ruler saw further opportunities for expansion in this region. Hieron celebrated this notable success by dedicating spoils from the battle to the temple of Zeus at Olympia. This plunder consisted of Etruscan helmets, lifted from the dead or fished out of the sea; on one of these is the scratched inscription denoting its origin and the event this donation celebrated.⁷⁰ It seems certain that Hieron wished to have his own victory considered the equal of Gelon's success over the Carthaginians at Himera. Why else would he have sent the spoils to Olympia, when his brother had sent a dedication to Delphi?

Even a partial Syracusan withdrawal from Magna Graecia is improbable; and this appears to be confirmed if the events related by Diodorus are a true reflection of Hieron's foreign policy at this time. The situation in the south of Italy in the second half of this decade became rather unstable. Under the year following Hieron's victory over a fleet of the Etruscan confederation, Diodorus records that a war broke out between the Greek city of Taras and the nearby indigenous Iapygii following a long spell of disputes regarding respective frontiers. The Iapygii are said to have assembled an army totalling 20,000, while the Tarantines were aided by the allies from Rhegium (Diod. 11.52.3). The opposing sides met in a battle, where, after a long struggle, the Greeks were routed. The Greek army appears to have split into two parts. One section consisting of the Tarantines retreated in disorder to their city pursued by the victors and suffered severe casualties. Meanwhile, the other half of the Greek army comprising the Rhegians, so Diodorus claims, retreated closely followed by their enemy all the way to the Straits. The Iapygii killed large numbers of the Rhegians as they tried to escape; and they even stormed into Rhegium and sacked the city. However, dramatic as the events appear to have been, the details are hardly credible. If the Iapygii chased the Rhegians from a battle near Taras all the way to the Straits, such a pursuit would not only be a unique event and one of truly heroic dimensions, but also logistically it is impossible. Diodorus expects his audience to believe that a defeated army could be pursued for nearly 400 kilometres (nearly 250 miles) through difficult terrain including high mountains, through the territory of other powerful tribes such as the Bruttii, and when they were finally caught by their pursuers these Greeks went on to lose

⁷⁰ The spoils will have consisted of the entire body armour of the fallen enemy troops, marines fighting on board the triremes, but only the helmets have survived. The usual victory trophy, which was fixed on a nearby tree after a battle, comprised helmet, breast plate, greaves and weapons. After a sea battle, a trophy might be erected in a nearby island or beach. Finley (1979), facing 113, has an illustration of the Etruscan helmet. The dedication reads, 'Hieron the son of Deinomenes and the citizens of Syracuse [dedicates] to Zeus the spoils [from the victory] at Cumae.' For the Syracusan celebration of victory of the Athenians in 413, see Appendix 5.

their city.⁷¹ Such a pursuit would have taken weeks rather than days and it would have involved all the logistics of supplying armies on the march. The rout, which ended in a battle, comprised a fairly brief mayhem in which the conquerors killed and plundered as many of the fleeing enemy as they could. There is no evidence for such a long-distance pursuit. But to make matters worse, Diodorus is also guilty of providing inaccurate testimony regarding Rhegium.

Hieron, who also had close links with Rhegium at precisely this time, is not recorded as having become involved in this supposed debacle, which is curious since the Syracusans were plainly highly active in the region, with probably their naval presence nearby besides further north, and they had friendly relations with the cities in the region. Hieron had married a daughter of Anaxilas, hence he must have had an interest in the political and military situation there. After the death of Anaxilas, who had ruled for 18 years (Diod. 11.48.2), his sons would have succeeded but had yet to become adults and so could not take power for themselves. In the meantime, a regent named Micythus was appointed to govern for these children.⁷² Nine years later Hieron interfered in the internal affairs of Zancle (Messene), states Diodorus (11.66.1–3), although this must also refer to events in Rhegium. Hieron is said to have invited the sons of Anaxilas to Syracuse. Once there, he urged them, now that they had achieved adulthood, to take back the rule of the *polis*, described as Zancle, from Micythus, who should be ordered to give an account of his period as ruler. These young men returned to Rhegium, where Micythus addressed the friends of Anaxilas in the presence of the former tyrant's sons and is said to have given the required account of his guardianship of the state. In fact, his account was so impeccable that the young men regretted the course of action they had been encouraged to take and, quite contrary to expectations, actually asked Micythus to remain as the ruler. Micythus, however, refused to renege on the agreement between him and Anaxilas. Perhaps he was put out by the interference of Hieron or he foresaw the possibility of civic instability if he chose to remain as ruler when the former tyrant's sons were now in a more independent position. And so Micythus presented all accounts to the new rulers, collected his own property and belongings, and sailed from Rhegium to the Peloponnese, settling in Tegea, where he died a figure respected by all. The episode may be historical, although it contains a certain degree of moralising. If it is historical then Rhegium cannot have been sacked in 473 for Micythus to have ruled since the death of Anaxilas and for some disruption to have occurred and not been recorded here.

⁷¹ The distances between Taras and Rhegium and Lilybaeum (Marsala) to Messene (Messina) in Sicily are roughly the same, 400 and 355 kilometres respectively. No such marathon-like chase of a defeated enemy is recorded for the Sicilian Greeks or anywhere else for that matter.

⁷² Diodorus states that Micythus became tyrant in his own right, but that there was an agreement that he would relinquish the rule once Anaxilas' sons became adults.

Why, then, does Diodorus appear to deliver such a particularly puzzling item in his narrative, which here is apparently littered with inaccuracy? In Book 11, Diodorus had to cover a great deal of important material, which, equally significantly, was a seminal point in the history of the Greeks, both those on the mainland and those in Sicily.⁷³ By contrast, the events in Magna Graecia receive much less attention; and it may be that in that region there was comparative calm compared to elsewhere, although Etruscan expansionism and internal wars between the various cities suggest otherwise. The supposed magnitude of the war between Taras and the Iapygii may therefore have been constructed to form a worthy episode to rank alongside those taking place in other parts of the Greek World. Still, this does not excuse what could certainly be an instance in which Diodorus misread or misconstrued his source; and a Greek city closer to Taras than Rhegium was more likely to have been the unlucky ally. Metapontum and Heraclea were smaller centres further along the coast and more susceptible to attack and destruction than Rhegium. The Iapygii and the Rhegians would in fact have passed these towns if the account was accurate, but nothing appears in Diodorus' very poor summary of these events. It is probably best to ignore this information as dramatic embellishment at best and inaccurate recording at worst.

In the internal affairs of Syracuse, Hieron was equally vigorous and interventionist. Under the year 476, Diodorus (11.49.1) comments on the mass removal of citizens from Naxos and Catane who were ordered to transfer to Leontini and settle there. Hieron was clearly concerned that Naxos, the furthest north of his subject cities in that quarter of Sicily, might be susceptible to an attempted secession if encouraged by Rhegium or Messene. It suggests that, while Anaxilas still ruled, Hieron was alert to the possibility of incursion into his territory. Marriage to a daughter of Anaxilas would have solved that concern. In the meantime, the former citizens of Catane were replaced by settlers from the Peloponnese and Syracuse. The settlers from the Peloponnese, who are said to have numbered 5,000, represented ethnic Dorians and were mercenaries paid to protect Hieron, who now chose to move his residence there from Syracuse. A total of 5,000 Syracusans were also settled in Catane. If these were Syracusans and not Geloans or some other social group then their role is less clear. These may represent particular supporters of the tyrant or more simply they represented an element in the community who would provide services for the other citizens of

⁷³ Diodorus' Book 11 concentrates on Xerxes' invasion of Greece and the defeat of the Persians by the Hellenic League. Sicilian affairs, because they included the battle of Himera, perhaps partly exaggerated by Sicilian Greek historians, also feature. The period covered spans roughly 480 to 450, hence the need for, in some cases, extreme brevity in the text, including the coverage of Salamis and Plataea.

this *polis*. No mention is made of the repopulation of Naxos, which may also have been garrisoned by mercenaries at this time.

The former Naxian and Catanaean citizens were relocated to Leontini, where they were obliged to integrate with an existing population. If these newcomers to Leontini numbered 10,000 citizens with their families, this represented an enormous figure to incorporate into a modest-sized settlement. Again, there must be some suspicion that Diodorus lost vital facts in the composition of his text. The arrival of so many new citizens was surely a recipe for disaster. Leontini was originally another Ionian settlement that for much of the time fell under Syracusan rule. Unlike Megara, which was destroyed, except perhaps for a garrison, or Camarina, which had a rollercoaster existence, Leontini had a permanent civic existence. But while it may have been intended from the time of Gelon that Leontini served a similar function as a satellite and border post, in much the same way as Acrae and Casmenae, the Ionian connections of this community seem constantly to have counted against it. It is possible, of course, that Leontini, like many other communities outside mainland Greece and Ionia, was facing a shortage in population and needed an influx of new dwellers, but it is also just as likely that Hieron wished to stoke discontent by purposely flooding the town with new inhabitants who would be greeted not with enthusiasm but with hostility and fear. *Stasis* may well have been in the mind of the ruler of Syracuse as a way of reducing rather than increasing the population, and that conflict between the three groups in Leontini now competing for restricted living space and inadequate resources would be inevitable.

Hieron had cleared Catane of its citizen body, gave the town a new name, increased its *chorē* to accommodate the new population of 10,000 with their families and slaves, and moved to the city (Diod. 11.49.1). Diodorus also states (11.49.2) that Hieron founded this new settlement in the belief that on his death he would be granted the honours of an *oikist*, as was the longstanding Greek custom. This was, however, something of a short cut to divine status seeing that the bricks and mortar of the community were already in place; and the comment is perhaps a spiteful observation from Diodorus' source. Divine status probably meant less to Hieron than his safety; and it is plain that, from about 474, the tyrant did not feel safe in his chief city. A change of residence to another city would hardly be solely governed by a desire to achieve 'heroic status' and to have a shrine dedicated in one's honour after death; and Hieron is certainly never accused of megalomania. Catane (Aetna), although a pleasant enough town in which to live, was decidedly a backwater compared to Syracuse. Therefore, implicit in the evidence is surely that Hieron no longer felt safe in Syracuse, but why that should be is not revealed. There was obviously a deliberate policy of first removing either possibly subversive or particularly loyal Syracusans from the city, although the second makes less sense, and then transferring the most loyal of the ruler's supporters, mostly mercenaries or so claimed, to Catane

(Aetna). Hieron's movement of people was based on the same process employed by Gelon, but it was rather more sophisticated and strategically related to his own survival. Therefore, it is plausible to argue that, from about the mid-point of Hieron's rule, a plot or series of conspiracies so unnerved him that even a fortified palace on the Island was not considered to be a safe enough refuge for the tyrant. There is no mention of attempts on Hieron's life, but he had been jealous of his younger brother's popularity as early as 476 (Diod. 11.48.3–4); and Diodorus (11.67.3–4) in an overview of the Deinomenid regime is highly critical of Hieron, whom he describes as 'greedy, prone to violence and an inveterate liar.' He also states that there were many who would have liked to rebel against Hieron's rule but did not do so out of respect for Gelon and Gelon's achievements in bringing peace to Sicily. Still, when Hieron retired to Catane (Aetna), there may have been a reduction in the level of dissatisfaction with his rule.⁷⁴ He died towards the end of 467 in his new city and was accorded heroic status and a shrine after ruling for rather more than eleven years. Once again, as there was no firm dynastic succession into the next generation, the rule passed to Hieron's younger brother Thrasybulus (Diod. 11.66.4).⁷⁵

The events of Hieron's rule are related in far more modest terms than Gelon but also with a highly negative slant. Yet Hieron was a highly successful ruler and in some respects far more so than Gelon in that he extended and maintained Syracusan influence well beyond Sicily and was able to celebrate a great victory over the Etruscans. Syracuse too must have greatly increased in size and wealth during the time he was the ruler. The city, no longer the sapling of Herodotus (7.156), had become a place of substance and not only in material terms but also in culture and the arts. Hieron was evidently keen to appear to be a patron of literature and possessed the wealth to attract philosophers and writers to his city. Of course, some care is needed with this assumption if Hieron spent little time in Syracuse after 474. Nonetheless, the Athenian playwright Aeschylus was certainly a visitor to Syracuse, as perhaps was the poet Simonides, while the poets Pindar and Bacchylides received commissions from Hieron and other

⁷⁴ Thrasybulus ruled in Gela, the senior city of the region after Syracuse, but who ruled the latter when Hieron departed is not recorded. Perhaps it was one of his mercenary commanders rather than another member of his family.

⁷⁵ Diodorus actually gives two sets of dates for Hieron's rule and this has some impact on the seasons in which the rule of Gelon and Thrasybulus ended. At 11.38.7 Diodorus assigns seven years to Gelon and eleven years and eight months to Hieron. At 11.66.4, Diodorus has eleven years to Hieron and a single year to Thrasybulus. Diodorus, clearly using two sources, gives both. If the more detailed account is the more accurate one, Gelon must have died early in 478, between January and March, and Hieron very late in 467, between September and November if Thrasybulus ruled for 12 months before his withdrawal from Syracuse before the end of 466.

wealthy Syracusan citizens.⁷⁶ Moreover, the poet and dramatist Epicharmus was probably active in the city during the period of the Deinomenid tyranny.⁷⁷

It is hardly remarkable that Thrasybulus, who succeeded Hieron, is condemned in the sources as being an even worse ruler than his predecessor. The topical element of the decline in calibre of tyrannical government should be duly noted.⁷⁸ However, it remains curious that the praise of Gelon should be so wholesome, when in fact ‘the mild rule’ with which he is credited involved the movement of so many individuals and the destruction of so many cities in the region. Perceptions about Gelon might well have been quite different if a historical account had been written by one of the displaced citizens of Megara Hyblaea or Sicilian Euboea, or even Camarina and Gela.

Gelon, son of Deinomenes, surpassing by far the rest in bravery and generalship by employing superior tactics against the Carthaginians, was victorious over the barbarians in a great battle ... dealing fairly with those overcome in the war and generally dealing in a kind fashion with all those living close by, he gained the praise of all Sicilians. Therefore he was well liked on account of his mild rule and he continued to live his life peacefully until its end. (Diod. 11.67.2–3)

This glowing testament given to Gelon is, therefore, surely the product of later propaganda, which was intended to provide Syracuse with a suitably dignified beginning and to put in place a paragon with which all later rulers of Syracuse might be compared. The passage in question (Diod. 11.67.2–5) is unlikely to have been composed in the first century, when the early history of Syracuse had become irrelevant, but during an earlier period, probably third century, when comparisons with Gelon might still be made and be appreciated by an audience.

In the period of the Deinomenid tyranny, Syracuse, as will be seen below, had a really quite exceptional population mix. It was not unique among the Sicilian Greek *poleis*, but it was on a radically larger scale than can be observed in centres such as Zancle or Himera. Zancle experienced several waves of immigrants of different ethnicity and in a short time became a mixed community, while Himera became a town in which there was a dominant Acragantine presence, which lasted for several years. In Syracuse, this phenomenon was an altogether more

⁷⁶ See also Appendix 2.

⁷⁷ That Epicharmus – see for example in the *OCD* – was regarded in antiquity as one of the most famous writers of this early period of Syracusan history may be gauged by the praise delivered in his memory by Theocritus, *Inscrip.* 18, who was another celebrated native of the city. Several inscriptions or epigrams that were fixed to statuary are credited to Theocritus, Edmonds (1912).

⁷⁸ Note the negative reputation of Phalaris, the sixth-century tyrant of Acragas in Pindar, *Pyth.* 1.95. Such unpleasant personal traits were easily transferable to other and later rulers.

Chapter 3

The Fifth Century Collapse (466–460 BC)

A risk of civil discord or unrest (*stasis*) was always present in any *polis* because of the discrepancy between the powers in the possession of, on the one hand, the *demos* or broad group of citizens and, on the other, the more select or discrete hierarchical groups that existed in the community. Among these elite groups and among the far larger citizen body, the permutations for factional groupings were endless. Figures from the elite could influence and lead sections of the community, while opponents from inside or outside that section of the *polis* could do likewise. The *stasis* at Syracuse, which also engulfed the entire south-east of Sicily and which terminated Deinomenid rule in the years between 466 and 460, adds a different and perhaps unique aspect to this definition. An analysis of Diodorus' narrative (11.67–8, 72–3, 76.1–6), on which we have to rely for information, reveals that it appears to be derived from two sources. The evidence it presents allows for a possible identification of, and another perspective on, what was considered *demos* and 'elite' in these particular circumstances. The seemingly widespread unrest at the time exposes a highly novel interaction between ethnic, socio-political and economic groups. Moreover, this discord was of a more lengthy duration than Diodorus or his source was prepared to admit. This fact has an impact on the chronology of the rule of the *demos* in Syracuse in the latter half of the fifth century BC. The narrative provided by Diodorus, or his sources, requires some analysis not only for an indication of reliability but also to illustrate the extent to which manipulation of the evidence has been accomplished.¹

A cursory glance might suggest nothing of particular value in Diodorus' notice of the period that covers the end of the Deinomenid tyranny at Syracuse. The text here is extant and so we are not reliant, as we sometimes are, on excerpts made by Byzantine scholars. It reveals quite clearly that the writer unusually, for elsewhere he has a strong bias towards affairs in Sicily, was either not interested in the events there or found that his source was rather limited in this respect. This is not surprising, since the Persian invasion of mainland Greece and the defeat of Xerxes took precedence in any history written of those times. Also worth noting

¹ It is clear that Diodorus often employed two sources and moved between them, creating his own narrative. However, his methodology was rather crude in that the sources are often clearly delineated in the text although rarely named. In Book 11, Diodorus was almost certainly switching between the histories of the Athenian Ephorus and the Sicilian Greek Timaeus. On Diodorus' use of Ephorus and Timaeus and how his style was influenced by the source at hand, see Pearson (1987) 145–6.

is that Diodorus' notice about the death of Hieron is more extensive than his brief comment about the rule of Thrasybulus.²

Hieron king of the Syracusans died in Catane, and received the honours of a hero because he was the founder of the city. Thus having ruled for eleven years he left the kingdom to Thrasybulus his brother, who ruled over the Syracusans for one year. (Diod. 11.66.4)

Thus in 466, after a brief rule, Thrasybulus (Diod. 11.66.4) was driven from the city and tyranny was abolished and replaced with a participative government that today is conveniently termed a 'democracy' and that brought peace and great stability to the city for a lengthy period. This is the essence of Diodorus' first source. Using his second source, Diodorus then goes on to describe the events in 466, the background to Thrasybulus' defeat and his eventual exile to Locri. He writes that, whereas Gelon, son of Deinomenes, founder of the family's rule, had been a popular figure, his younger brother and successor Hieron had become hated. Nevertheless, he had not faced an outright rebellion out of residual respect for Gelon. Still, Hieron surely recognised a lack of support because in his last years he lived not in Syracuse but in Catane, which he renamed Aetna.³ On his death Thrasybulus, his last surviving brother, took control in Syracuse and behaved in an even worse fashion than Hieron. Thrasybulus is treated with much hostility by Diodorus (11.67.5–68.7) whom he describes in much more negative terms. To be fair, Thrasybulus must have taken over the reins of power at a time when Syracuse had become a hotbed of unrest accompanied by infighting among the ruling elite. It would have taken a ruler of exceptional talents to weather the brewing storm. And it is worth noting that Thrasybulus had governed Gela for many years for Hieron before he became ruler of Greater Syracuse. No mention of misrule of that city surfaces in the sources at all, whereas in Himera the maladministration of Thrasydaeus the son of Theron became notorious. If Thrasybulus' misconduct had been the equal of that of Thrasydaeus, some comment regarding his activities in Gela would surely have been preserved. Nonetheless, Diodorus states that Thrasybulus was, like Hieron, prone to violence;⁴ he was also bloodthirsty (φονικός), ordering the execution of numerous citizens, and immoral, sending other citizens into exile on trumped-up charges in order to access their fortunes.

² Diodorus rather curiously dwells at length on some intrigue at Rhegium and Messene in which Hieron was involved during the year of his death, 11.66.1–3.

³ The re-foundation date is secure since it is corroborated by Pindar's evidence, *Nem.* 1.1–5, 2.1–2, 'newly founded', dated to between 476 and 474, and probably indicates that Hieron no longer found Syracuse to be a congenial residence.

⁴ Diodorus uses the same word βίαιος to describe both Hieron and Thrasybulus. Polyzelus, the brother who did not rule, was probably portrayed as more affable and popular than either Hieron or Thrasybulus.

In such a volatile environment, in which the ruler hated his subjects and was equally the object of universal odium, Thrasybulus hired mercenaries to shore up his position. This simply exacerbated the situation and brought about a rebellion on the streets. At first, Thrasybulus tried to negotiate with his subjects, but when this failed he raised an army consisting of the mercenaries who had been settled by Hieron in Aetna (Catane) and hired still more so that he possessed an army of 15,000. With this army he seized Achradina and the Island and so began a period of *stasis* in the city (Diod. 11.67.8). On reflection, the crimes attributed to Thrasybulus look as if they have been magnified a great deal, since even the most brutal tyrant could probably not have been so active over such a short period of time. Either that, or Thrasybulus actually ruled Syracuse as well as Gela for his brother for several years before he became sole ruler. He is also credited with the accumulation of a large force of mercenary troops, in which, like Hieron, he placed more faith than in a levy from the citizen body. However, he seems to have drawn heavily on the mercenaries settled in Catane by his predecessor, who had relied on their military support. And so while Thrasybulus may have possessed in total an army numbering 15,000, most of these were his brother's standing army and he is also said to have possessed other allies. The diplomatic contact with the rebels is not a course of action usually attributed to tyrants, but here it was possibly meant to indicate intrigue rather than sincerity. The talks failed and he launched a war on his own subjects.

But who precisely were these subjects of the tyrant of Syracuse? Aristotle (*Pol.* 5.1312b) gives a rather different slant on this episode and fills in some important details about this very issue. He states that the patience of the citizens of Syracuse was finally exhausted and, led by other members of the elite, among whom were members of the Deinomenid family, they rebelled against Thrasybulus. He also notes that Thrasybulus had become ruler by bribing his nephew Gelon's son Deinomenes to relinquish power.⁵ However, he was overthrown after just 10 months by friends and relatives of his nephew, but these Deinomenids were also driven out of Syracuse soon afterwards by other former supporters.⁶ And it was

⁵ Thrasybulus is said to have usurped the succession, since both Gelon and Hieron possessed heirs yet no recognised line of accession existed and power and experience counted for more than the relationship. The position of the heir remained uncertain even in the fourth century, as is evident in the way that Dion tried to prevent the succession of the younger Dionysius in 367. Note that Aristotle may have been mistaken in his identification of an otherwise unknown son of Gelon and that he meant Deinomenes, the son of Hieron.

⁶ In terms of chronology, Aristotle is no more precise or helpful than Diodorus, for he claims that Gelon ruled for eight years, but the rule is usually dated 485–478; that Hieron ruled for ten years, but he is usually given a rule of eleven years (478–467); and that Thrasybulus ruled for ten months, *Pol.* 5.1315b. Pindar, *Pyth.* 1.58 mentions that Deinomenes son of Hieron made dedication at Delphi, and he appears to have been active for some time later probably as ruler of Aetna. See further discussion below.

this second spate of expulsions that seems to have set in motion a series of violent clashes between both internal and external forces until the Syracusans received, according to Aristotle, their best government. By this, of course, Aristotle must mean the period of ‘democracy’, which is generally dated between 466 and 405, but which may be seen, following some reinterpretation of the evidence, to have begun at least half a decade later than is conventionally dated.

The rebellious citizens of Syracuse, in response to the belligerent action of their tyrant, are then said to have occupied Tyche (Diod. 11.68.1), another suburb of the city, and sent messengers to various Greek and Sicel communities including Acragas, Gela, Selinous and Himera, asking for material aid against Thrasybulus. All responses were apparently positive, such was the lack of popularity of the newest Syracusan tyrant, and infantry, cavalry and warships are said to have been despatched to help overthrow Thrasybulus. These arrived and the rebels were able to display a formidable force at their disposal, whereas Thrasybulus had lost most of his allies with the exception of his force of mercenaries, and he had lost control of the entire city except for Achradina and the Island (Diod. 11.68.3):

Thrasybulus, deserted by his allies and placing his hopes only on those mercenaries, was in control of Achradina and the Island, and the Syracusans held the remaining portion of the city. (Diod. 11.68.3)

Diodorus next claims that Thrasybulus led out his fleet and was defeated with heavy losses, so he withdrew to the Island. After that, he led his mercenary army out from Achradina and engaged in battle with the rebels but was again defeated. As a result, and knowing that he would not emerge victor in this conflict, he reopened negotiations and finally offered to withdraw from Syracuse. The citizens then gave permission for his mercenary troops to leave the city and were presumably unharmed. Other cities were freed from their tyrant rulers or invasive garrisons. Democracies were proclaimed everywhere; and Syracuse entered a new phase of prosperous peace, which lasted until the tyranny was re-established by Dionysius (11.68.6).⁷

The origin of this passage seems to be a decidedly Syracusan source. After all, it appears patriotic and enthusiastic about the city and its history. Diodorus often cites his sources, but he does not do so in Book 11, so some guesswork is needed; and some errors in the text suggest that this was perhaps not the usual material he employed. Whereas Ephorus and Timaeus are two likely sources

⁷ Diodorus concludes this coverage, 11.68.7–8, with a moralising message about Thrasybulus, who, he says, obtained a rule that had been initially created on sound principles, but he had lost this through his own wicked behaviour and he spent the remainder of his life as a private citizen. This looks rather a doublet of comments about the younger Dionysius (see further below) and a topical rather than a real assessment.

for information, Diodorus may well have had access to an earlier writer such as Antiochus, perhaps through the latter's work.

The description of Thrasybulus' fall is superficial, a little clumsy and not that sophisticated, while the moralising element in the narrative makes Thrasybulus into an archetypal tyrant. So he was worse than his brother, either executing or exiling many of his fellow citizens and confiscating their property; and he became so hated that he was forced to employ mercenaries to protect him. His misrule caused civil unrest, which broke into rebellion, and since the tyrant was unable, or lacked the talent, to overcome his enemies through non-military means, fighting began. The tyrant fought on land and sea; he was defeated both times and therefore gave up hope of success, going voluntarily into exile and finding residence in another city. There is obviously hardly any personal detail about Thrasybulus, which perhaps accounts for the lack of depth in the narrative either of Diodorus or of his source.

There are other problems with this text, however, which require scrutiny, for Thrasybulus is said to have initially expelled the rebels from Achradina and the Island. Since these areas comprised the entire city in 466, what was left to the rebels? Diodorus states that the Syracusans took hold of a certain place – the MS is slightly questionable here – but which is now transmitted at Tyche.⁸ From here the rebels organised their fight against Thrasybulus. This place was therefore outside the main fortified area of the city, to which they now laid siege. Since Tyche was probably only fortified later, the city was not actually divided into competing sectors and the *stasis* had taken on a new meaning if what is transmitted is historically accurate. If Tyche is where the rebellious Syracusans were situated then this adds to the problems of understanding the text. Diodorus is quite categorical about the military engagements, one on land and the other a naval fight. However, if Thrasybulus possessed as many triremes as the text claims (11.68.3) – bearing in mind that Gelon had a fleet of 200 triremes, according to Herodotus (7.197) – even if half that number could be rolled out, this would still represent a total number of 20,000 rowers and *epibatai*. And this total far exceeds the army of heavy infantry with which he is credited. In other words, it starts to look as if the tyrant actually maintained his control of much of city population as well as its physical location. It is therefore more than likely that the text disguises the extent of the support of a rebellion against the tyrant, which was actually confined to an elite group among the citizens, as Aristotle says (*Pol.* 5.1312b). Moreover, if these rebels were situated only in the area of what is now regarded as Tyche then, since their numbers were small, their urgent request for aid seems quite plausible, but much less so is an ability to wage a

⁸ See Oldfather (1946) 4.300 for Tyche as the obvious meaning from a copyist error in the manuscript.

campaign on sea or indeed besiege their own city, which is what they appear to have been doing.

Tyche, as any map of Syracuse will show, cannot ever have had access to the sea.⁹ All ancient evidence points to an area close to Epipolai, which may have reached the sea but where the beaching of ships was impossible since the coastline is rugged. The harbours of Syracuse are at the lower end of Achradina – the Small Harbour – and along the northern rim of the Great Harbour at the northern end of the Island. There was just one way the rebels could launch a sufficiently powerful fleet to overcome Thrasybulus; and that would be if they held a section of the Great Harbour perhaps at Dascon, or had brought their warships ashore some way to the north of the city. With Catane in the hands of Hieron's mercenaries, no help could be expected from that quarter, which leaves the peninsula at Thapsus, the area around the town that later became Augusta, or much further to the south at Elorus. All alternatives bring their own problems, not least since none of them, if acting as a base, could actually allow a fleet to apply the pressure of successfully blockading Thrasybulus and forcing him into leading his warships out of his safe harbours. The whole episode is therefore probably an invention based on later military actions such as the Athenian siege or one of the Carthaginian invasions.¹⁰ Here it is simply another instrument aimed at enhancing the negative portrayal of Thrasybulus. Diodorus' source, rather than the historian himself, perhaps has sought to put a positive spin on the revolt against Thrasybulus, making it appear a populist movement, but the figures simply do not add up. Support for the rebellion was plainly far less than as it is presented. It is therefore possible that the final success against Thrasybulus came from the troops sent by other cities that wished to be free of Syracusan domination or occurred because the tyrant's troops mutinied. Like Dionysius II (see Chapter 8), Thrasybulus, whose last days seem derived from accounts of the end of tyranny in 344, surrendered too soon. But the city was not spared more futile infighting.

Thrasybulus is also said to have used the mercenary troops from Catane; and this city remained under his control to the end. At this point, some sense in the overall account begins to emerge, since by 463 in Diodorus' narrative (11.72–3) euphoria has clearly turned to despondency. This second extensive coverage of Sicilian events begins in a positive fashion, but a much more negative slant quickly appears. Once Thrasybulus had departed into exile, the citizens, under a general amnesty of some sort since it is now clear that support for a rebellion was not

⁹ Tyche was fortified between 466 and 415 and so was almost certainly not a walled quarter of the city in 466. Although the exact position remains difficult to pinpoint, on one issue there can be no difficulty: Tyche does not have access to any harbour facilities. For further discussion of Tyche, see Evans (2009) 22–3.

¹⁰ For the Carthaginian sieges of Syracuse, see Evans (2009) 91–100.

unanimous, gathered in an assembly and voted to be governed by a democracy. They also voted that a statue should be made of Zeus *Eleutherios* ('The Liberator') and that they should hold annual sacrifices and games on the day that they had removed their tyrant (Diod. 11.72.2).¹¹ So far so good, but when it was decided that eligibility for holding public office was to be limited to those families who could trace their citizenship back to the period before Deinomenid rule, more dissension occurred. The citizens with ancient Syracusan pedigree were clearly in a minority and hence regarded themselves as an elite group among the community. This proposal was obviously met with hostility from those groups who had been admitted to the Syracusan citizenship by Gelon and his successors; and it was especially resented by the mercenaries who had supported this regime and who were now left unemployed with the departure of Thrasybulus, but who were still clearly represented in the *polis*. Yet it is completely obscure how these mercenaries could have been accommodated in the city for three years before a problem presented itself, and points either to some sloppy chronology or to the loss of some vital information about this period.¹²

If the date 463 is correct, does this mean that Thrasybulus' tyranny actually continued for longer than is generally supposed or that to begin with a compromise was reached in which the mercenary contingent was promised a place in a new political dispensation and that this was maintained for up to three years before a new period of *stasis* began?¹³ There can be no clear answer without evidence, but clearly the position in Syracuse remained highly volatile. Furthermore, the democracy that the Syracusans wished to portray then or later did not immediately follow the tyranny of the Deinomenids. The two sides, the Syracusan elite and the rest, were at loggerheads and the mercenaries again seized Achradina and the Island (Diod. 11.73.1); and so, once again, the Syracusans who considered themselves to be the only true citizens were excluded from the main centres of the city. Because of its evident obsession with exclusive dignities, this elite group was not only thrown out but ceased to hold any privileges at all. Considering the intense fighting that is said to have taken place in the course of Thrasybulus' downfall, it is remarkable that the Syracusans were not better prepared militarily for another round of

¹¹ Diodorus maintains that an annual sacrifice of 450 bulls was to be made and that the citizens would gather for this feast. This is probably misdated and refers to the period of Hieron II in the third century.

¹² It suggests, as noted above, that these mutinied and forced Thrasybulus' withdrawal, but that the Catanaean mercenaries had simply returned to Catane.

¹³ Diodorus states (11.72.3) that Gelon had employed 10,000 mercenaries as his bodyguard, although elsewhere we are told that the tyrant had no need for protection and that 7,000 of these mercenaries remained in the city in 463. A total of 3,000 may have been killed in the fighting in 466 – or some of these may have accompanied Thrasybulus into exile. And there were at least as many mercenary troops settled in Catane.

infighting, especially seeing that they themselves had incited the new crisis. It is, of course, possible that they were taken by surprise; and in their concern about exclusivity in this democracy, they appear to have also lost the support of all other citizens who were of more recent origin. In effect, the elite was excluded by a discrete mass and literally lost its *polis*.

However, the Syracusans were evidently made of stern stuff and fortified some area out towards Epipolai (Diod. 11.73.2), which may of course be the area that Diodorus has already described as Tyche. He also claims that they were able to invest the city and prevent supplies reaching the beleaguered enemy. However, reference to a map will again show that possession of Tyche or even a substantial section of Epipolai would not have caused great hardship to those inside Achradina and on the Island, since supplies were still able to come from the south via Elorus and Polichne or arrive by ship into the harbours, neither of which the Syracusans could have held. If the mercenaries were allied with the Geloan faction then they could easily be supplied from Gela. If the Geloans had sided with the Syracusans at this point then the mercenaries would have been in a less favourable position but would still have had access to the sea. Therefore, the text here is once again extremely flawed and appears inaccurate if not incomplete; and Diodorus has made no attempt to make a coherent assessment of what was clearly a very complex situation. He also writes that those inside the city were fewer in number than the Syracusans outside, which simply makes no sense whatsoever. He claims that, although the mercenaries were more experienced fighters and so were able to come off better in any engagement against superior numbers, 'being cut off from the country they were lacking in supplies and short of food' (Diod. 11.73.3). This comment cannot stand if those inside the city were militarily and numerically stronger. It is plain that a standoff had been reached, but that the outcome at this stage could hardly be predicted. The change in fortunes of the mercenaries may well have been linked to whether or not they commanded the support of the Geloans in Syracuse. If these at first joined the mercenaries but then switched sides, this might just account for settlement, which was reached later on.

Diodorus continues the narrative under the year 461 BC. This third coverage of Sicilian affairs (11.76) has a retrospective feel about it and seems to reiterate remarks on the warfare between Thrasybulus and the Syracusan citizens. Yet it also has greater depth and helps to flesh out and make sense of the previous account at Diodorus, 11.73. The Syracusans, if Diodorus and his source can be believed, were now in a position to launch assaults on Achradina and the Island; they defeated the mercenaries in a sea battle but were unable to gain a foothold in the city. This is mainly a repetition of the material of 466; and Diodorus' source may indeed have referred to this time, which was then relocated by the later historian to 462/1. It is quite obvious that there was little real information at hand about events in the 460s and that filling up the narrative with material

from earlier episodes has been used either by a negligent source or is possibly extracted from another writer whose information has not been synchronised. Finally, another land battle is said to have taken place, an obvious doublet here with the battle against Thrasybulus (11.68.4). Note that both battles are supposed to have been hard fought and resulted in heavy casualties, but that the Syracusan citizens were twice victors. The additional detail here is that 600 men were called the ‘chosen’, probably meaning that the cavalry were rewarded for their bravery with prizes in silver worth a mina each.¹⁴

While this struggle continued, another dimension was added with the activities of a certain Ducetius described as a chief of the Sicels (Diod. 11.76.3).¹⁵ According to Diodorus, this Ducetius was prompted to attack Catane (Aetna) over a border dispute. Simultaneously and apparently by coincidence, the Syracusan citizens are also said to have been campaigning against the citizens of Catane (Aetna), who were the mercenaries employed by Hieron. These two forces combined their efforts and seem to have agreed that they would expropriate certain parts of the Catanaean *chorē* between them.¹⁶ The campaign lasted some time, since there was a number of engagements until the mercenaries must have negotiated a settlement by which they could vacate Catane and move their possessions to Inessa, which they renamed their new Aetna. This was clearly not the overwhelming victory for the Syracusans that they and their newest ally Ducetius had hoped for, since, far from grabbing the lands of Catane, instead they encouraged the former citizens of this city to return (Diod. 11.76.3).

A close look at the narrative for 462/1, therefore, reveals some duplication of events caused by a lack of real evidence in the original sources for the period. Reading Diodorus’ text without taking this into account will simply lead to confusion and miss some remarkable constitutional points of interest. It is possible to make some sense of Diodorus’ coverage by accepting the use of two discrete sources, the first highly positive towards Syracuse and the second more concerned about the general trends in the regions. That it was a period of peculiar instability is not hard to ascertain, yet the text is revealing not just for the incessant disunity of the Sicilian Greeks but also for what they believed constituted citizenship to a *polis*, who qualified for this right and who did not, and to whom this principle was of importance. From 11.76.4, this retrospective gaze allows additionally for some notion of the demographic composition of Syracuse in this period to emerge.

¹⁴ This was the equivalent of 100 drachms – not a huge sum, for the cavalry usually came from elite families.

¹⁵ For his career and conflict with Syracuse in the 450s, see Chapter 4.

¹⁶ The text of Diodorus here is virtually incomprehensible and deals with some sort of land sortition, but this was discussed or even put into practice before these allies had defeated the mercenaries at Catane (Aetna).

Diodorus reflects in the finale on the problems that bedevilled Sicily in the 460s: that all those displaced inhabitants of cities and towns who had been affected by the whim of Hieron and who had lent aid to the Syracusan citizens were rewarded with the former places of residence, while those then occupying these urban centres were in turn expelled. If this occurred in or about 460 then this massive relocation and new displacement of people can hardly have brought a rapid return to the peaceful conditions supposedly (11.68.6) prevalent for 'nearly sixty years.' And indeed, this is not even noted at the end of the last section, which is devoted to the events of the 460s (11.76.6). Mentioned among the citizens who returned to their previous homes were those from Gela, Rhegium and Messene. Acragas and Himera are also mentioned, although it is worth noting that this is the first reference to these cities and perhaps is meant to indicate individuals who had come to help the Syracusans earlier (11.68.1) but who were in fact exiles from their own cities.¹⁷ The reference to Rhegium and Messene (Zancle) is also a mystery, for although Hieron had meddled in the affairs of these cities they were also situated some distance from the instability around Syracuse. It may also refer to exiles who had come to the aid of the rebels against the Deinomenids.¹⁸

The Geloans also mentioned in this passage belong to an entirely different category to the others. Indeed, the situation at Gela was related to a process that was much more protracted. In the first place, Gelon son of Deinomenes was not even a Syracusan by birth but from one of the most ancient families of Gela. When he took sole power, according to Herodotus (7.156), he introduced a formidable Geloan presence into Syracuse, if only to safeguard his position and person. How many citizens of Gela took up residence then is of course not recorded, but plausibly, since Herodotus claims that half the citizenship body accompanied Gelon – and this must have been a selection from both elite families and from the wider *demos* – the total can hardly have been less than 500 and was almost certainly over 1,000 individuals with their families. A figure much less than this seems unreasonable for the numbers needed for a bodyguard, an entourage and those skilled in administering a city.¹⁹ And this number would not have included mercenaries, who are deemed more a feature of Hieron's rule but who were also employed by Gelon, though arguably less in evidence. Therefore, under Gelon the Geloans clearly represented a hierarchical group

¹⁷ This seems to be implied, since the text concludes that they were aided in their return, Diod. 11.76.4. If these troops had represented official intervention, they would hardly have needed to be reinstated in their cities.

¹⁸ See How and Wells (1912) 2.192, who suggest that the range of sources used by Diodorus was broader than the two argued here and that one may have focussed more on Magna Graecia than on Syracuse. However, it is clear that Antiochus wrote extensively on events in southern Italy and must surely be the ultimate source for much of the information found in Diodorus' account.

¹⁹ For Gelon's earlier career and tyranny at Syracuse, see Chapter 2.

above that of any other elite group. Under Hieron the situation became even more complex, for even from the late 480s Gelon and his successor continued to augment the population of Syracuse in an unorthodox manner that involved a mass movement of neighbouring populations; and it is to these that Diodorus refers in this passage (11.76.4–5).²⁰

The case of Camarina is also interesting for an understanding of Syracusan demographics in this period. Thucydides (6.5), in his brief mention of the history of Camarina, says it was founded by Syracuse,²¹ but that its citizens were expelled when they rebelled against their metropolis. This must have been some time before the 490s, since the city was re-established by Hippocrates with Geloans, but within a short time Gelon had these forcibly removed (Herodt. 7.156) and they were added to the citizenship body at Syracuse; and then Camarina was destroyed. Since these citizens of Camarina were also Geloans by origin, they would have been among the privileged group and thus they would have further cemented Gelon's primacy. Sometime after 460 BC, when more peaceful conditions returned to the region, Gela re-founded Camarina for a third time. Unfortunately Thucydides gives no clue about the ethnic makeup of the last foundation; it might have come solely from Gela, although its hesitant and ambivalent role during the Athenian siege of Syracuse in 414/13 BC suggests that the repopulated *polis* came from other backgrounds besides Gela. There were many other displaced people available, not least among the mercenaries, who seem to have willingly relinquished their control of all the urban centres they held during the immediate post-Deinomenid period.

The citizens of various cities, which must include Syracuse and Catane, were so desperate to regain their homes that they came to terms with these mercenaries. Diodorus (11.76.5–6) puts a rather positive spin on this result, giving the impression that the mercenaries were under so much pressure that they were happy to leave with their possessions and that this was a favour granted to them. It is more likely that this very large group, comprising not just the troops but also their families, was in fact bribed to go and that these all relocated to Messenia. This was probably not Messene in the Peloponnese but the former city of Zancle on the Straits. Diodorus may have believed that the mercenaries were given safe passage from Sicily, but the logistics are simply far too complex for this ever to have been accomplished. And these mercenaries were surely not all from the Peloponnese or elsewhere in Greece, but almost certainly from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. To repatriate all of these people could not have been

²⁰ Diodorus seems to suggest that another group controlled Gela at this time, but this is probably a generalisation, as is perhaps the reference to Acragas and Himera.

²¹ Thucydides' evidence points to a foundation of about 600 BC, but it may well have been twenty to thirty years later. Strabo, 6.2.5, says that in his day (early first century AD) it was deserted.

Changing Syracusan Demographics under the Deinomenids

Before 485 BC	Syracusans of ancient pedigree Syracusans from Camarina reincorporated
485	Geloans who accompanied Gelon
483 (?)	Leading citizens from Megara Hyblaea and Sicilian Euboea added to city*
Before 478	Geloans moved to Syracuse from re-established Camarina
476/4	Five thousand Syracusans removed to Catane (Aetna) – returned in 463/1?
485–67	Build-up of mercenary troops to a total of ca. 15,000

*Also note the different ethnic groups who were enrolled as Syracusan citizens, especially those of Ionian descent from Megara Hyblaea and Sicilian Euboea. There was probably also a discrete background among the many mercenary troops some of whom will have been Dorian from the Peloponnese, but others originated from Campania and Southern Italy.

contemplated. Besides the soldiers, many thousands would have needed to be transported across the Ionian Sea at great cost at a time when the communities involved would surely have been in financial difficulties. A relatively short march to Messene would have obtained the same result – these individuals who were no longer wanted would be removed. It may also indicate a compromise that the mercenaries gained in their negotiations, since control of Messene meant control of the Straits.²² What the citizens of Messene or indeed those in the Peloponnese might have thought about such arrangements, is left untold.

The Geloan faction must have remained the single most influential group at Syracuse, between 485 and 466 at least.²³ As an elite body, they were probably supplemented in their numbers, since Hieron had ruled in Gela for his brother and Thrasybulus had probably done likewise for Hieron. With each changeover of ruler, the closest supporters of the ruler moved from Gela to Syracuse. Some of these families had been settled in Syracuse for twenty years by the expulsion of Thrasybulus. These were persuaded to leave only after the withdrawal of the mercenaries in about 460 and with the incentive of a grant of the whole territory of Camarina.²⁴ The Geloan faction probably fell out with Hieron and

²² Campanian mercenaries were settled in Aetna and Entella, Diod. 14.61.4.5, while Messene was later to become the home of other mercenaries from the same region of Italy.

²³ A certain Hagesias of Syracuse celebrated by Pindar, *Olympian Ode*, 6, was perhaps also a Geloan, since Hieron is named in the ode, dated to 472/68 BC.

²⁴ Camarina was re-founded, as Pindar's evidence indicates, *Olympian Ode*, 4.10–15, 5.1–5, dated between 460 and 453, although the dedicatees of the odes may well have been Geloan by birth. Diodorus certainly seems to believe that the Geloans who had first founded Camarina took possession of the land, 11.76.5.

made his life so uncomfortable that he moved to Catane. Notably he did not return to Gela, where friction may have resulted with Thrasybulus. The Geloans next took the lead in ousting Thrasybulus and then the entire Deinomenid clan, as Aristotle reports. The question of a *polis* elite during the Deinomenid rule seems a concept that had been supplanted by a regional elite dependent on the ethnic background of the ruler namely Geloan. With the fall of the Deinomenid tyranny, tensions inevitably arose between the existing elite and the former elite, namely the chief Syracusan families of pre-Gelon times.

The Demography of Syracuse in 466 BC

Before 485	Majority were Syracusan (Dorian) citizens, some with ancient pedigree Syracusan settlers from Camarina reintegrated into the city
485	Half the citizens of Gela resettled in Syracuse
483	Elite families from Megara Hyblaea and Sicilian Euboea made Syracusan citizens
480s (?)	Gelon transferred the Geloan settlers of Camarina to Syracuse
485–67	Gelon and especially Hieron recruited increasing numbers of mercenary troops; some of these were of Peloponnesian origin
476/5	Catane and Naxos depopulated Populations transferred to Leontini, but some may equally have gone to Syracuse 5,000 Syracusans went to Catane, but what was their origin? 5,000 Peloponnesians went to Catane

But Geloans, mercenaries and Syracusans were not the only groups in Syracuse. Gelon had notably desolated the town of Megara Hyblaea in 483 after it surrendered to him; and he sold off the *demos* as slaves and transferred the elite to Syracuse.²⁵ The same drastic action appears to have occurred at a town named ‘Sicilian Euboea’ (Herodt. 7.156).²⁶ Hieron transferred the people of Naxos and Catane to Leontini (Diod. 11.49.1–2), where they were instructed to make their homes with the existing population. Naxos and Catane, meanwhile, were repopulated with new citizens. Diodorus specifies that 5,000 from the

²⁵ These slaves need not all have been sold to overseas traders – some will have been found in the cities of eastern Sicily and some of these will have regained their free status.

²⁶ This town has never been identified, but is likely to have been somewhere on the east coast of Sicily. It may have been destroyed by Gelon and then completely lost during one of Mount Etna’s many eruptions. It is noted by Strabo, 6.2.6, but only insofar as it was deserted like Himera and Selinous, and he omits to mention a location. He does state, however, that it was founded by Leontini and hence was situated perhaps at or near the mouth of the Terias River.

Peloponnese and 5,000 from Syracuse were sent to Catane, which was renamed Aetna (Strabo, 6.2.3). Those from the Peloponnese, a fairly general geographical origin, were probably mercenaries; the 5,000 Syracusans may have been a civilian group designated to represent the wider *demos*. Both groups will have been keen supporters of Hieron and are later identified wholly as mercenary troops, none of whom were specifically invited to return to Syracuse. Naxos probably received a smaller number of new settlers, since it was a less significant town, although its harbour was the best along this stretch of the coast. Diodorus gives no information about Naxos, but it was probably intended that those resettled there acted as a garrison on the border between the Syracusan lands and Messene–Rhegium to the north. Naxos also gave easy access to Locri, which was already an ally of Syracuse. Catane (Aetna) and Naxos were therefore strategically important and hence the new citizens of these had to be the most trusted and keenest supporters of Hieron. However, for the former residents of these towns, this move to Leontini may have been a way in which Hieron rid himself of potential troublemakers, who were sent into internal exile. It is not reported how the citizens of Leontini reacted to the newcomers. It was never more than a modest-sized town and was probably overwhelmed with these exiles; and this was hardly a situation conducive to a peaceful co-existence.²⁷ Leontini was founded as an independent community, but for most of its history in the fifth and fourth centuries it was either at loggerheads with its much more powerful neighbour Syracuse or it was a satellite town under its rule, as occurred during the Deinomenid tyranny.²⁸ The date, or rather dates, seeing that two states are involved in this mass redistribution of people, are perhaps early on in Hieron's rule, soon after 478, when he was intent on illustrating a military prowess in order to maintain popularity in Syracuse. The original Naxians or the Catanaeans are not remembered as having settled in Syracuse, but it is possible that some did.²⁹ All of these displaced citizens of their former cities were absorbed

²⁷ It is said that Hieron, by founding a new town named Aetna, hoped to be honoured as an *oikist* on his death and so achieve semi-divine status. This did indeed happen, Diod. 11.66.4, although his tomb was later moved to Inessa, renamed Aetna after his supporters in Catane were forced to move in 460. Theron sent new settlers to Himera, where the population had suffered in the recent war with Carthage, and these lived peacefully with the original citizens until it was destroyed in 409. It is possible that Diodorus' source dwelt on this issue of new and old citizens, but he gives it just a passing allusion: old and new Himeraeans co-existed in a reasonable way, and this was in contrast to the citizens in south-east Sicily.

²⁸ Strabo, 6.2.7, notes that the land of Leontini was also neglected in his day. Livy, using Polybius as his source, 24.7.1–8, shows it was still a flourishing centre, and where Hieronymus the last king of Syracuse was murdered in 215/14.

²⁹ Diodorus has clearly written a précis of a more extensive account in his source, perhaps Timaeus rather than Ephorus for this earlier period of Syracusan history, or Antiochus. Note

into the Syracusan citizen body, but it seems from Diodorus (11.72.3) that, even if they had belonged to elite families in their own *poleis*, they never regained their status. However, there was another group, which must have regarded all newcomers with contempt. No information is preserved about this group at this time, but it is easily imaginable that it consisted of those families who could trace their histories back to the original band of settlers who had accompanied Archias the *oikist*, and they no doubt claimed that their citizenship was linked to a pedigree of six to seven generations. The rest would always be *parvenus*.

Some of these additions to the citizen body were not even Dorian in background, which probably placed them even lower in the social hierarchy among the Syracusan elite. The displaced elite Megarians, like those from Sicilian Euboea, were of Ionian descent, but unlike the Ionians from Naxos and Catane they were resettled in Syracuse. The metropolis of Megara Hyblaea lay geographically close to Corinth and hence the ethnic difference may not have been regarded as sufficiently significant, while the numbers relocated from Sicilian Euboea must have been small enough not to be considered a threat to stability in the city. Their numbers were too small to be regarded as a major supplement to the population, so they may have possessed something intrinsically desirable for the Syracusans to want them to remain after 466, when others who had lived in the city for an equal length of time were expected to leave. Neither Megara Hyblaea nor Euboea was re-founded then, so any ethnic differences between these two groups and the Syracusans were overcome. These families must therefore have been totally absorbed through intermarriage and economic and religious ties. Of course, Gelon had been sure to sell the *demos* of both small towns into slavery (Herodt. 7.156; Thuc. 6.4) and there were perhaps at most five hundred citizens wealthy enough to be described as *hippeis*.³⁰ It is also worth noting that, without the *demos* that had been completely dispersed, the elite families from Megara Hyblaea and Euboea could not have realistically entertained the idea of re-establishing their *poleis*. Whatever the full reasons for these two groups being ignored in the convulsions that occurred in the period between 466 and 460, they do not appear as a separate group again after the destructions of their cities in the 480s.

The various mercenaries who are attested as being settled everywhere were certainly from discrete backgrounds both in a geographical and in an ethnic

the comment of John Tzetzes, Diod. *Frag.* 10.29.1 on the early life of Gelon, which had been covered by Timaeus and Diodorus, also Dionysius of Halicarnassus and Cassius Dio. Diodorus' dating appears to place this dislocation to 477/6, Oldfather (1946) 4.253.

³⁰ Five hundred of the wealthiest citizens of Sybaris were expelled by Telys when he took power, probably soon before the city's fall in 510. Although Athenaeus (*Deip.* 12.519 b–c) claims that Sybaris possessed 5,000 *hippeis*, this seems unlikely given the nature of the site. For a discussion of this issue, see Evans (2013) 25. The Syracusans probably had just 600 *hippeis*, which was the elite that triumphed in 461, Diod. 11.76.2.

sense. In Syracuse alone, they are said to have numbered about seven thousand. Assuming that Diodorus is referring to fighting men then the actual total number of persons was far higher if one includes ex-fighting men past the age of serving in an army, in addition to women and children. The total number of these alien residents, who at the same time were quasi-citizens because they must have possessed as many rights as an ordinary citizen and probably more, was probably in excess of twenty thousand. This does not include the servile factor, which might well double the total population figure. Such a total is already the population of a fair-sized *polis* in the classical period of Greece, yet it represents only a small section of the community living in Syracuse. While it might be expected that this mercenary element accounted for less than the number of Syracusan citizens, this is not necessarily the case and it may in fact mean that mercenary and citizenship numbers were roughly equal or that the former actually outnumbered the latter. This argument finds some strength in Diodorus' account, which appears to show that the original citizens of the city in 466 were expelled shortly after they had managed to triumph over their tyrant (11.76.1):

In Sicily the citizens of Syracuse were making attacks on both Achradina and the Island in their war against the mercenaries who had rebelled; and they were victorious over these rebels in a sea battle, but it was not possible to expel them from the city because of the strength of the places they held. (Diod. 11.76.1–2)

Once again, within a matter of half a decade, the Syracusans were excluded from their own city, because it then consisted of just these two suburbs. Diodorus or his source indicates that the citizens of Syracuse must have been driven out of their own city by those who were meant to guard them but who had been despised and feared at the same time.³¹ They responded by making assaults by both land and sea, which suggests that they had removed to some distance from the city. Polichne or Elorus were both possible destinations. Polichne possessed a community that must have been close to the Olympieion, and the beach at Dascon was nearby and within sight of the city. If the Syracusan army that eventually defeated the mercenaries had made a camp here then they would have been able to mount some form of blockade of the city that they wanted to regain. Elorus, situated on the coast some 40 kilometres (25 miles) to the south, must also have possessed a harbour, but that would have made military operations more difficult. In a battle probably outside the city walls, the Syracusans emerged victors after a costly fight to both sides. Diodorus (11.76.2) notes that the best

³¹ Tyche and Neapolis were joined to Achradina and provided with defensive walls in the period before the Athenian siege in 414, while the plateau of Epipolai was fortified only under Dionysius I.

troops of the Syracusan citizens were rewarded with monetary prizes in silver. However, it is also clear that those praised for their bravery numbered just six hundred, which probably indicates that the engagement did not involve great numbers of troops. Nor, indeed, is it specifically stated that the mercenaries who occupied the city were forced at this point to withdraw from it.

In 461, the Syracusans may conceivably have tried to occupy Catane (Aetna) as a base, since at about the same time as they were fighting the mercenaries in the city they are also placed in that vicinity by Diodorus (11.76.3). He appears to describe a series of events that occurred just as the Syracusans were fighting their battles with the mercenaries in the city, but the former did not have the numbers to launch simultaneous campaigns, as is evident when he relates that a joint Sicel–Syracusan attack was made on this city, aimed against those mercenaries installed there by Hieron.³² It seems that the Syracusans excluded from their own city were now hopeful of taking another with the aid of allies. The residents of Catane (Aetna) were worn down by a lengthy campaign and finally offered to withdraw. They moved instead to Inessa, which they renamed Aetna.³³ This event may have some causal connection with the conflict in Syracuse, which was concluded soon afterwards. The original citizens of Catane were now encouraged to return from Leontini, where they had been moved by Hieron more than a decade and a half earlier (Diod. 11.49.2, 11.76.3). And as the events in Syracuse plainly reveal, residence in or even citizenship in another place was not necessarily regarded as permanent even after fifteen or twenty years. There is no information about the numbers returning to Catane, if indeed they went willingly or were forcibly ejected from Leontini – or were allowed to remain where they were. There seems to have been mass displacement and movement in theory, but this phenomenon may have involved fewer dislocated persons, although evidence, slight as it is, suggests that Sicily was affected in a most extreme fashion at this time.

The joint action of the Syracusan and Sicels against Catane (Aetna) introduces a new figure, Ducetius, who is described as ‘leader of the Sicels.’ The alliance on this occasion gives a notable insight into the relationship between the Greeks living on the coast and the tribal communities of the interior. Ducetius seems to have united a number of these groups; and his aims and aspirations have drawn detailed study comment.³⁴ But of surely more significance is the fact

³² Catane had access to the sea and was used later by the Athenians as one of their early bases in the invasion of Sicily, although they seem to have preferred the harbour at Naxos, see Chapter 6.

³³ The tomb of Hieron will have accompanied this removal, but no reference remains. However, a son of Hieron named Deinomenes is described as active in the years after 466 and he may have ruled in Catane and Inessa into the 450s, Pindar, *Pyth.* 1.58; Paus. 6.12.1, 8.42.9. See further discussion in Chapter 4.

³⁴ Jackman (2006) 33–48.

that the Syracusans in less than a decade had gone from belonging to the most powerful city-state in Sicily to having to rely on a Sicel chief in order to win back their mostly disintegrated *polis*. Diodorus makes it appear that Ducetius and the Sicels had a longstanding enmity with the citizens of Catane (Aetna), since the latter are said to have stolen land of the former. However, this is a little puzzling, as Catane (Aetna) was itself a city with a lengthy history and possessed a well-identified *chorē*, one that no doubt was recognised by the other inhabitants of the region. The citizens of the city installed by Hieron would have simply utilised what was there already. Besides, the outcome of a protracted period of warfare clearly shows no connection with the sort of border dispute that characterises petty warfare between states such as Segesta and Selinous later in the century. Catane's borders do not obviously impinge on Sicel lands, since to the north lay Naxos, to the south the territory of Syracuse formerly belonging to Megara Hyblaea, and to the west Leontini. There is no real place where severe friction over land can be identified. The primary objective may therefore have been a desire to force the mercenaries from the city and make them go to another home. It seems possible that Diodorus has changed the emphasis of this attack on Catane (Aetna) to being one that related to the ambitions of the Sicels, when it seems more plausible to assume that it was one that, if successful, was to the advantage of the Syracusans and not Ducetius at all. After all, those current Catanaeans simply moved a few kilometres to the west to Inessa, a further intrusion into Sicel territory, while the Syracusans may well have obtained a base from which to continue their war with the Syracusan mercenaries.

The complexity of the Syracusan demography hardly requires further comment; and although there is no concrete evidence for anything other than skeletal statistics, some attempt to reflect the trends here does bring the situation into sharper focus. Thus by 466 the population at Syracuse consisted of the following: the dominant Geloans, including the former Camarinaeans; the mercenary troops employed by the tyrants who had a wide background but including the Peloponnese; the Syracusan elite; various groups from Megara Hyblaea and Sicilian Euboea; probably displaced people from Catane and Naxos; and foreign residents including Sicels. Furthermore, Catane and Naxos were populated in part by mercenary troops and former citizens from Syracuse, while in Leontini its own citizens were forced to share amenities with those displaced from Catane and Naxos. Finally, Megara Hyblaea, Sicilian Euboea and Camarina had been completely destroyed. No evidence exists for population groups in Gela, but the city may have been deliberately under-populated to prevent any rebellion against the Deinomenids. Elorus is not mentioned and was probably too insignificant a town to warrant much attention. Messene (Zancle) was controlled by Rhegium and also had its fair share of new population groups; and it became the home probably of many of the mercenary troops who were eventually persuaded to leave Syracuse, Aetna and various other cities further south.

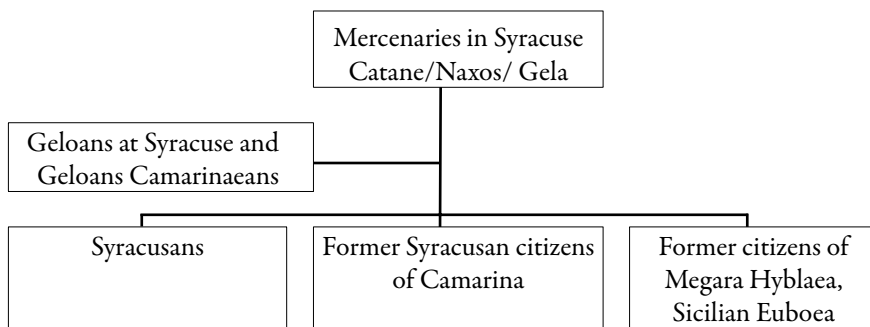
Elite Groups' Movements in Syracuse in the Period 485–460 BC

Before 490	Camarinaeans removed to Syracuse; Camarina re-founded by Hippocrates
490–485	<i>Stasis</i> between elite group and wider <i>demos</i> in Syracuse <i>Geomoroi</i> displaced by <i>Cyllyrii</i> (and <i>demos</i>) The elite was exiled to or sought refuge in Casmenae
485	Geloan elite introduced by Gelon
483	Elite families from Megara Hyblaea and Sicilian Euboea made Syracusan citizens
Before 480	Geloan settlers in Camarina transferred to Syracuse
478–475	Large increase in numbers of mercenary troops at Syracuse
476/4	Hieron transferred 5,000 Syracusan citizens to Catane and 5,000 Peloponnesians Similar or perhaps fewer troops garrisoned at Naxos Catanaeans and Naxians moved to Leontini – some to Syracuse?
466	Deinomenids excluded Thrasybulus Deinomenids driven out by Geloans Syracusans driven out by Geloans/mercenaries and other 'foreigners'
463	Syracusans were unable to take the city Syracusans defeated citizens of Catane with help from Ducetius Mercenaries at Catane went to Inessa Five thousand ex-Syracusans (?) available to supplement war effort at Syracuse
460	Truce at Syracuse; mercenaries persuaded to withdraw from the city Geloans bribed with land of Camarina to leave Other foreigners absorbed into Syracusan <i>demos</i>

Diodorus provides a double conclusion to the expulsion of the Deinomenids. In the first (Diod. 11.68.5), Diodorus specifically notes that from the departure of Thrasybulus Syracuse was at peace: the city became prosperous and it was to possess a democracy for nearly sixty years. In the second (Diod. 11.72.1–2), he again claims that Syracuse and the entire island after the overthrow of the Deinomenids was making much progress towards prosperity. He then goes on to describe the cultivation of the land made possible by peaceful conditions; and he notes that this in addition to the fertility of the region quickly brought

good harvests and an increase both in livestock and in the number of slaves who worked the farms. These sections require some comment if only because the vague nature of the description is suspect, especially if one were to compare his description of Sicily after the overthrow of Dionysius II and the prosperity brought on by the rule of Timoleon (344–338). This looks very much again as if either a doublet is in evidence or Diodorus has applied the topical elements expected in descriptions of post-tyrannical rule. The inaccuracy of Diodorus' second passage is immediately corrected in his own account, as he goes on to describe what is obviously continuing instability that continued over at least the next six to seven years. Yet in an apparently concluding note at 11.76.6, dated to 460, though this too is not corroborated elsewhere, Diodorus states that the displacement of population groups, especially the mercenaries, brought an end to the instability in the whole of Sicily and the restoration of democracies was accompanied by a sortition of the land belonging to each of the Greek cities.

Syracusan Demographics in Graphic Format



The first round of civil unrest in 466 involved the expulsion of Thrasybulus, and presumably his closest supporters, by members of the Geloan elite including his own family. The Deinomenids were then expelled by probably the same members of the Geloan elite. The second round of instability took the form of forced expulsion of the Syracusan citizens from the city that bore their name by the mercenaries; and these were on balance supported by the Geloans, who had most to lose by not having access to the public offices. This was followed by a prolonged siege lasting six years or more. The final round witnessed the withdrawal of those in possession of the city and the mass displacement of people over the entire region.

Note the prominence given to what may be described as attempts at ethnic cleansing among the various Hellenised communities aimed especially at eliminating the mercenaries, both those who were of Greek background and those who were plainly non-Greeks (Campanians, Iberians, Italic). They

were regarded as the guardians of tyranny, but such sentiment disguised an undoubted jealousy about their position in Syracuse and elsewhere. They were not slaves, but held a powerful place in the socio-political hierarchy, and they are overlooked as an elite group. The individuals and families that regarded themselves as the original settlers of Syracuse were vastly outnumbered by later arrivals by 467/6 and even by 485 when Gelon moved to the city. The decade following the death of Hieron was extremely unsettled and affected the whole of south-eastern Sicily; and the root of the problem lay in the radical mixing-up of civic populations. Thus the elite in Syracuse, at least from the later years of Hieron's rule, were actually the mercenaries, while the original Syracusans were a minority group yet merely a section of the mass along with ex-citizens of Gela, Camarina and Megara Hyblaea, and probably others from Catane and Leontini as well. This most likely also means that the citizen body, whatever that may mean at Syracuse, was demilitarised and that the mercenaries not only propped up an increasingly unpopular regime but were themselves so associated with this rule that they had become the elite. In the period from the expulsion of Thrasybulus in 466 down to 460, the mercenaries or their commanders ruled Syracuse and the elite composed of many origins – Sicels, Etruscans and Campanians. Syracuse was as regular a piratical community as any found in the early modern history of the Caribbean.

It seems that an elite group in Syracuse in the immediate post-Deinomenid period was not of any particularly longstanding pedigree, unlike the cities in Greece and Ionia. In fact, the Syracusan elite between 485 and 466 was probably Geloan rather than Syracusan *per se*, and between 466 and 460 a mercenary-based group of who knows how many different ethnic backgrounds.³⁵ And such a peculiar state of affairs seems to be mirrored across the region so that Catane did not possess a Catanaean elite, Leontini did not have an exclusively Leontinian elite and Messene was dominated by a Rhegian elite, while other towns such as Naxos, Megara and Camarina were deserted. Gela alone appears to have been unaffected, although the sources may simply be silent on the issue; and in fact the return of certain Geloans in 460 prompted the resurgence of Camarina, reflecting tension among elite groups in that city as well.³⁶ To sum up: the phrase 'a state of flux' comes readily to mind and is almost a pervasive feature of the ancient western Mediterranean, where the Greek cities for one reason or another seem to have never been able to produce a homogeneous population. The admission of new citizens and high percentage of foreign residents led to

³⁵ In a rather curious throwback to earlier events, Acragas, originally Geloan, was by Strabo's day populated with the same Geloans while their metropolis was deserted, 6.2.6.

³⁶ Acragas, Selinous and Himera lie outside the discussion here. Acragas had its own tyrant down to 472, while Selinous may have received refugees from its metropolis Megara Hyblaea soon after its destruction in the 480s; but again, no evidence survives.

a heterogeneity not only in the *demos* but also among the elite, which might at times be a source of strength through sheer weight of numbers. But the diverse origins of the citizens could also produce violent phases of *stasis* because of the lack of cohesion. By 460, Syracuse at last found peace – and with it, a democracy emerged.

Deinomenid Military Forces (485–460 BC)

- 1 *Gelon*: 200 triremes (Herodt. 7.158)
20,000 hoplites and 2,000 *hippeis* plus 6,000 light armed troops
(Herodt. 7.158)
 - 2 *Hieron*: defeat of the Etruscans in 474 BC shows that the fleet was
maintained
At Catane: 5,000 Peloponnesians (mercenaries) and 5,000 Syracusans
(also mercenaries?)
Were Hieron's new Naxians (5,000?) also mercenaries?
 - 3 *Thrasybulus*: between 7,000 and 10,000 mercenary troops in Achradina
and on the Island
Maintained fleet
-

The Opposition (Syracusan) Military Forces between 466 and 460 BC

- 1 Syracusans awarded prizes to 600, each receiving a silver mina in value.
Total number of troops not many more than 10,000
 - 2 Various allies from Greek cities
 - 3 A fleet that defeated Thrasybulus
-

Chapter 4

Democracy and Ducetius (460–427 BC)

From these times Syracuse was experiencing a great deal of peace, acquired much wealth, and preserved its democratic form of government for nearly sixty years until the tyranny of Dionysius. (Diod. 11.68.6)

A little later in his narrative than the quote above, Diodorus reiterates, using his other source, that as soon as the Deinomenid tyranny had been abolished the whole of the island made great strides towards an almost idyllic peace (Diod. 11.72.1) There was an abundance of natural produce and domestic animals, slaves tilled the fields, profits from selling their goods were healthy, and everything that had been squandered on incessant wars was now directed to making the lives of the citizens better than they had ever been. But almost before the inhabitants of Sicily had the chance to enjoy the fruits of peace, they were plunged again into warfare and division, a situation that tells against the notice of a lengthy period of prosperity and peace on the island. The text that Diodorus has employed is clearly inaccurate, moralising and dismissive of the achievements of the Deinomenids, which elsewhere, at least as far as Gelon is concerned, are extolled by Diodorus himself (11.67.2–3). The sentiment may belong to Ephorus, who as an Athenian writer would have cause to denigrate the memory of tyrants while celebrating the achievements of a democracy, even if these were plainly spurious. As noted above, the expulsion of Thrasybulus was part of a far more complex political event than simply the removal of a tyrant and his replacement by government of the *demos*. A democratic form of government did not in fact take hold in Syracuse until 461/60. Then it was immediately involved in a military campaign, which it could only afford to undertake with the aid of Sicel allies. In the course of 461, possibly earlier since the narrative is vague, the Syracusans attacked Catane (Aetna); and either while they were besieging the city or shortly beforehand, a local Sicel leader named Ducetius also participated in this assault. But no sooner had these allies won a victory over the mercenaries of Hieron, than they quickly fell out and the history of almost the next decade is one of warfare between the Syracusans and Ducetius.

A very obvious result of the prolonged spell of civil war in Syracuse was the city's loss of dominance in Sicilian affairs. The by-product particularly in evidence of this unstable environment was the activity and achievements of Ducetius in the decade 460–450. It has sometimes been argued that the aims and ambitions of Ducetius reflect a fledgling or proto Sicilian or Sicel

patriotism.¹ If this is true, it was born out of Syracusan weakness; if false, it rather illustrates the personal desire for pre-eminence by a local chief who by all accounts was more Greek than indigenous Sicilian. Ducetius, a Sikel leader in this region, is described as having had the benefits of contacts with Greek culture and education, since he was a member of an influential family (Diod. 11.78.5).² The Sicels he ruled over were in a dispute with the citizens who had been established at Catane (Aetna) by Hieron. In order to accommodate these new settlers, Hieron had appropriated land from a nearby Sikel community; and these Sicels wanted the land returned. By themselves, the Sicels were evidently no match for the citizens in Catane (Aetna); and although it is not stated in Diodorus' text, there had probably been an ongoing border dispute since Catane (Aetna) had been founded, an issue that had become more contentious after the death of Hieron and the expulsion of Thrasybulus. The Syracusans had entered into this confrontational situation clearly intent on expelling the mercenaries who had recently supported the Deinomenids, the latter no longer a force in Syracuse. However, the Syracusans too now lacked the military capability either to storm into Catane (Aetna), killing or ejecting its occupants, or even to cause much damage to the area. Ducetius and the Syracusans became allies, not, it seems, in a fully organised siege, but in harrying the inhabitants of Catane (Aetna) and distributing the outlying farms of the latter among the invaders. The former mercenaries of Hieron responded by attacking their enemies; but now that they were outnumbered, they were defeated on a number of occasions. Finally, there must have been some agreement between the two groups, since those living in Catane (Aetna) were allowed to depart unharmed. Clearly, the military strength between the two sides was evenly balanced; and only a blockade forced the former mercenaries of Hieron to relinquish their city. Their opponents too evidently lacked the resources to win an outright victory, since the former citizens of Catane (Aetna) simply moved a short distance to the west and occupied the Sikel town of Inessa, which they renamed Aetna (Diod. 11.76.3).³ They did not enjoy their new place of residence for long, however, since it was

¹ But see, for example, the discussion of Jackman (2006) 33–48, especially 34, 'his importance in Sikel state-formation is often overemphasized', and 46, that his ambitions lay more in 'a trend towards types of states which moved beyond the *polis* in its traditional sense.'

² Ducetius was exiled to Corinth in 450, Diod. 11.91.4. His activities in this city, notably with regard to being allowed to leave and found a colony on the northern coast of Sicily, certainly give the impression of one comfortable with Hellenic culture, Diod. 12.8.2.

³ There is no mention of a ruler of the community in Catane (Aetna), but it was probably Deinomenes the son of Hieron. Fränkel (1962) 453 believed that Hieron had installed a young son as ruler in Catane (Aetna), but Hieron had lived and died there. Deinomenes probably became ruler of this town in 467/6 and was clearly active for some time, as Pindar (*Pyth.* 1.58), and Pausanias (6.12.1, 8.42.9) show, but he was surely dead when Ducetius took Inessa (Aetna) in 451.



Figure 4.1 The Acropolis at Leontini. The citizens of Catane returned to their former homes in 460 (Diod. 11.76.3).

captured by Ducetius in about 451 (Diod. 11.91.1). In the meantime, the original Catanaeans were invited to leave Leontini and return to their former city (see Figure 4.1).⁴ In Diodorus' text (11.76.4), this is made out to be a great triumph for the Syracusans, but it must also have been a major coup for Ducetius; and his Sicels, even if not mentioned, had been instrumental in restoring many of the displaced communities to their homes. This was not an instantaneous or isolated advent: for the most part, the new geo-political situation must have developed only gradually with much negotiation, which involved compromises on all sides.

Presumably Ducetius regained the land that had been lost to his community; and probably as a result of supporting the Syracusan cause, he was also given

⁴ Naxos was evidently reclaimed by its former citizens, although no mention is made of their return at this time, but Thucydides, 4.25, shows that there was still a community there in 425. Destroyed again by Dionysius, the site was deserted; and Tauromenium, situated on the hills above the Naxos layer, became the main urban centre in this neighbourhood. Further north, along the Straits, the sons of Anaxilas, who were ruling in Rhegium and Zancle, were also expelled in the same year, victims of the highly unstable political climate and extreme antipathy towards tyrants and their supporters, Diod. 11.76.5.

carte blanche to extend his influence and rule in that sector immediately to the west of Catane. His foundation of a new settlement named Menaenum (modern Mineo) and his sack of Morgantina certainly appear to be causally connected to his previous activities against Hieron's former supporters. Diodorus states (11.78.5) that this brought Ducetius fame (δόξα) among his own people, but surely it would also have been the cause of concern to the Greeks, especially since this new town was just 40 kilometres (25 miles) west of Leontini. Morgantina at this time was a community of the Sicels, which indicates that Ducetius was also expanding his control of the interior at the expense of his own neighbours.⁵ His ambitions to further extend his territory would inevitably bring a rupture of the previous alliance with Syracuse; this turned into a war, the outcome of which could not be predicted.

The cause of this uncertainty lies in information that Diodorus notes under the year 454 (11.86.2–5), a full six years after the expulsion of the mercenaries from Catane. A war broke out between the people of Segesta and Lilybaeum, which was the result of disputed land along the Mazarus River.⁶ This resulted in a number of military engagements, in which both sides lost large numbers of their citizens but from which neither side gained an advantage. Diodorus leaps from relating this specific episode to a more general observation about the state of affairs on the island. He, or rather his source, indicates that there was turmoil as a result of the most recent land redistribution to settlers who had been awarded the citizenship of various cities in a careless fashion. This lack of attention to the calibre of individual citizens and their worth to the community became a cause for internal unrest and *stasis*. This malaise was particularly evident in Syracuse; and all within just five years of the inauguration of a government supposedly welcomed by the *demos*. A certain prominent citizen, named as Tyndarides, courted the popularity of the poorer elements among the citizen body and, arming some of these as a bodyguard, was clearly intent on making a bid for sole power. He was certainly helped in nearly achieving this aim by the lack of any official means to prevent an organised uprising. Tyndarides is said to have been arrested, tried by a court and condemned to death, but as he was being led away to the prison his followers

⁵ Morgantina is said to have been founded by an Italic tribe, Strabo, 6.1.6, 6.2.4, but it is more likely by this time to have been ethnically identical to Ducetius' own community that occupied adjacent lands. Morgantina (modern Aidone near Enna) is roughly 80 kilometres (50 miles) north-west of Leontini. A line joining Mineo (Menaenum), Morgantina and Leontini, shows the effective extent of Ducetius' power. See Map 2.

⁶ Lilybaeum is usually considered to have been the settlement that the Carthaginians founded only after their defeat at Motya in 397; but this information, if accurate, illustrates the existence of an earlier community that had the power to oppose Segesta. Diodorus does not, of course, note the ethnic component of Lilybaeum at this time; and it may not have been Punic, as it was later.

intervened and attacked those guarding the convicted man. He might well have made his escape if, so Diodorus claims, the better sort of citizens had not armed themselves and in fighting in the streets the rebellion, its leader and his followers were crushed. Diodorus claims that this was not a unique episode at this time, but that Tyndarides' plot was just one of several attempts at gaining tyrannical powers; and so legislation was approved by the citizen assembly for a penalty similar to the ostracism of the Athenians (Diod. 11.86.5)

Whereas the Athenian *demos* could condemn anyone considered to be too powerful to exile for ten years, though that individual's property or fortune was not forfeited in his absence, and voted for this measure by scratching that person's name (or some abbreviated form of the name) on a potsherd, the Syracusans put the name of anyone they wished to exile on an olive leaf. The citizen who received the greatest number of olive leaves had to go into exile for five years (Diod. 11.87.1–2).⁷ Therefore, the Syracusan system was not as harsh as the process employed in Athens, although the intention was the same. Petalism also remained in operation for far less time than ostracism, its Athenian equivalent.⁸ The reason given by Diodorus (11.87.3–5) for the inauguration of this practice seems plausible enough, as does his explanation for its discontinuance: the most prominent citizens were being exiled and the most honest of Syracuse's socio-political elite began to avoid becoming involved in public life in case

⁷ Just as *ostraka* or a potsherd describes the Athenian system, so the process in Syracuse was called petalism, not from the petal but from the leaf on which the name or abbreviation, since the olive leaf is really quite small, must have been painted by using one's finger. There are logistical problems concerning petalism, which should be noted here. The olive leaf is much smaller than any *ostraka* and presumably had to be dried before it was distributed. On this small leaf, a single letter may have sufficed. The finger was probably dipped in some sort of white-wash made up of liquid chalk or lime; this would have worked on a dried leaf but probably not on a recently picked leaf. But accuracy using just a finger seems a rather primitive practice, especially when so many individuals were involved, since an assembly of citizens would have contained thousands rather than hundreds. However, brushes or suitable styli – if such implements existed – cannot have been used extensively or have been available at mass meetings. Moreover, counting such dried leaves, which become brittle and could easily be broken, may also have been problematic, especially if there was more than a single candidate for exile. The whole nature of petalism and its historicity appears questionable to say the least. That Diodorus is the single source for '*petalismos*' must also be a cause for concern, in that, unlike ostracism, there is no ancient corroborative evidence. The olive leaf was associated with victory, if the leaves on the helmet of Athena on Athens' coinage after 480/79 are any indication, and not with defeat, which is how the process of petalism, like ostracism, concluded. *Ostraka* were clearly objects on which a mechanical exercise could be undertaken; the same cannot be said for the olive leaf, fresh or dried. For petalism, see Rhodes (2000b) 639; Green (2006) 167–8.

⁸ Athenian ostracism was first employed in the 490s and last used to exile the politician Hyperbolus between 417 and 415, Thuc. 8.73.3; Hyperbolus was killed at Samos in 411.

they became targeted by more unscrupulous fellow citizens who sought greater influence in the city by bringing false charges.⁹ In effect, therefore, political life became dominated by just the sort of individual that the petalism law was designed to block. The fear of informers and bribery actually weakened the democratic system and so the law was soon repealed. In Athens, it is evident that corruption was also present in the process of ostracism; and although it was employed rarely, the infamous case of Hyperbolus, recorded by Thucydides (8.73.3), caused it to be abandoned altogether.¹⁰ In Syracuse, the weaknesses of the process became quickly apparent; and although the threat of tyranny remained, it at least encouraged the supporters of the democracy to play a more visible role. That the precarious state of the political system should be exposed so quickly after it was adopted at Syracuse indicates a certain lack of fundamental strength and commitment to democracy, which became ever more obvious in the following decades.¹¹ Moreover, the instability in public life in the 450s again undermined Syracuse's previous role in the region and on the island and clearly contradicts the claims that the city under a democracy inspired peace and that the people achieved new heights of wealth (Diod. 11.87.5). The source, needless to say, was ultimately Antiochus, who again wished to portray his city in the best possible light in a construct in opposition to the tyrannical government of Hieron and Thrasybulus.

Diodorus shows well enough that not only did an unstable political environment continue in the city after the expulsion of Thrasybulus but that the calm attributed to the years from either 466 or 460 is simply unhistorical. Furthermore, Diodorus also discloses the fact that military adventures overseas were still high on the political agenda. He notes that tensions between Syracuse and the Etruscans warranted enough concern for the former to send a naval force north along the coast of Etruria (Diod. 11.88.4). This reaction may have been brought on by a renewal of Etruscan interest – Diodorus describes this as piracy, but raiding takes on many forms – in the coast of Campania; and if a Syracusan presence was still at Ischia, this would have been enough for the deployment of a

⁹ Forsdyke (2005) 285–7, argues that the process, unlike Athenian ostracism, was employed frequently in a very short space of time, which brought the criticism against its use and its subsequent rejection.

¹⁰ Plutarch places the date sometime between 417 and 416 and just before the debate about sending a second expedition against Syracuse. Hyperbolus was a minor figure compared to Nicias and Alcibiades and he tried to make political capital by having one of them ostracised. They foiled his attempt and joined forces to have Hyperbolus exiled.

¹¹ The election of 30 *strategoï*, each in command of a force of citizens, probably belongs to this time and represents an attempt to ensure that the city was always ready for war, as a result of the bad times in the 60s, yet with no single general exercising control. The large number of commanders would seem to indicate a democratic element, whereas a smaller number might better reflect the sentiment of the elite families.

Syracusan war fleet.¹² The commander is named as Phaÿllus and he seems to have operated all along the coast of mainland Italy up to the island of Elba (Diod. 11.88.4: 'Athaleia'). He is said to have plundered the island and therefore landed forces there, but he did not remain in the area for long or accomplish much worth noting. Diodorus states that he was bribed by the Etruscans to depart; and that when he returned to Syracuse, this misconduct became known and he was prosecuted, found guilty and exiled. However, there are some problems with this brief mention in the text, since it may well be unhistorical. The conviction of Phaÿllus bears a distinct resemblance to the account of the fate of Pythodorus, Sophocles and Eurymedon, who were the generals leading the first Athenian expedition against Sicily. On their return to Athens in 424, they were accused of colluding with the Syracusans and convicted of receiving bribes (Thuc. 4.65).¹³ The continuing threat from Etruscan raids meant that after Phaÿllus was removed from his command the Syracusans immediately despatched another fleet. On this occasion there were in total 60 warships (Diod. 11.88.5), which was a formidable show of strength from a city that had clearly not been in a position for several years to command anything like the military capability that the Deinomenids had been able to lead. The new general is named as Apelles and he is said to have launched attacks along the coast of Etruria before attacking Corsica (Cyrnus). Corsica contained a number of enemy towns and forts; when these had been looted, Apelles seemingly established a garrison on Elba and then returned to Syracuse, bringing much plunder with him. The problem with this episode is that, once again, the veracity of the text is highly questionable. This second expedition looks almost identical in detail to the expedition that was launched and led by Dionysius I in 384 (Diod. 15.14.3–4; Strabo, 5.2.8).¹⁴ Furthermore, it is unlikely that these Syracusan naval forces could have been as effective as is claimed without bases along the Italian coast. This would suggest either that a presence at Hipponium and on Ischia, which may have ended in the chaos of the 460s, was re-established or that this entire war was invented to give some lustre to a democratic government at Syracuse that, in the late 450s, was extremely weak and fractious. A force of 60 triremes would have involved 12,000 rowers and *epibatai* (marines), not to mention a number of hoplites and

¹² The Etruscans may have lost control of Rome at about this time, but the league of Etruscan cities remained a formidable power throughout the fifth century.

¹³ Laches and Charoeades were the original commanders of the expedition, which began in 427. Charoeades was killed in early fighting, Thuc. 3.90.2. Laches was replaced in 426 by Pythodorus, Thuc. 3.115.5. Sophocles and Eurymedon joined Pythodorus in the spring of 425, Thuc. 3.115.5. Eurymedon was fined, but his fellow generals were exiled.

¹⁴ See also Evans (2009) 122. Dionysius, who also had a fleet of 60 triremes, sacked the temple of Eileithyia at Pyrgi. From there the Syracusans looted 1,000 talents and took prisoners who were resold as slaves for another 500 talents' profit. Dionysius also launched an assault on Corsica. Thus a historical doublet seems certain.

perhaps cavalry as well. Yet as recently as 461/60 the Syracusans were unable to muster forces large enough to subdue Catane (Aetna) without their alliance with Ducetius.

Ducetius, meanwhile, had extended his control of the interior of the island (Diod. 11.88.6), without, it seems, having antagonised the Greeks or having been seen as a potential threat towards the cities on the coast. Diodorus gives little in the way of background or detail of how this was accomplished by Ducetius; and here he is obviously abbreviating a much more extended account. The Sicels of Hybla are said not to have been subjected to Ducetius' rule or to have reached any understanding with him, but all other communities in the interior fell under his influence. He was so sure of his power that he transferred his home town of Menaē (Menaenum, modern Mineo) from its position on a well-fortified hill, as was a common feature among the Sicels, onto the nearby plain.¹⁵ He also ordered the construction of a new town, perhaps actually to replace Menaenum on this nearby plain, which he named Palicē (Diod. 11.88.6), and which apparently quickly flourished because of the fertility of the land. No doubt the lack of possible Greek attacks at this time was also a contributory factor to its rapid success. Diodorus lists these achievements of Ducetius under the year 453, precisely when there was instability in Syracuse and when the attention of those ruling in the city may have been drawn to external affairs in Italy. Palicē's rise (modern Rocchicella), even if protected by strong fortifications, was nonetheless brought to a bitter end just as quickly (Diod. 11.90.1) as was the rule of Ducetius.

In 451 (Diod. 11.91.1), Ducetius' ambitions escalated with an attempt to achieve primacy over the Greeks, who remained in some disarray. He raised an army, which marched into the territory of Inessa (Aetna) recently occupied by Hieron's former mercenaries resident in Catane. Since Inessa had been a Sicel community, the new settlement probably retained many of its original population now reduced to servile or lower-social status and so the successful outcome of an assault was almost certain. Ducetius had the leading figure of Aetna assassinated and captured the town.¹⁶ He then moved his forces, which were clearly much more substantial than they had been a decade earlier, south towards Acragas. Ducetius was intent on attacking a fortress named Motyum (Diod. 11.91.1), which was situated somewhere along the border between his own rule and that of the Acragantini.¹⁷ The *demos* of Acragas must have appealed to their Syracusan neighbours for help to repulse an attack that might be the prelude to a full-scale invasion. The Syracusans appear to have responded

¹⁵ The interior of Sicily remains a region characterised by hilltop towns, the most famous of which is Enna.

¹⁶ This was possibly Deinomenes, the son of Hieron.

¹⁷ For Motyum, see Adamesteanu (1962) 185–6.

quickly, by sending a force that joined with an army from Acragas. Diodorus (11.91.1) does not provide any detail of the sizes of the forces involved, but the Greeks were not in a position to easily throw back the Sicel army. An engagement took place from which Ducetius' forces emerged victorious: the Greeks were not only routed but also lost both of their camps. However, Ducetius committed the tactical error of not following up his victory and instead chose to withdraw because of the onset of winter. Still, the text indicates that he had in fact already taken possession of the fort at Motyum, which had been his objective.

When the defeated Syracusan army returned to the city, its general, who is named as Bolcon, was blamed for the defeat and was accused of having been bribed by Ducetius. The name Bolcon (Βόλκων) appears not to be Greek; and this individual may have been a mercenary from Iberia or Italy who had been hired to fight for Syracuse against Ducetius.¹⁸ As a mercenary, his activities would be more scrutinised than those of a citizen; and the suspicions of treason against him, whether unfounded or not, were sufficient for his execution to be ordered. In more general terms, the hiring of a mercenary to lead a military expedition suggests either a lack of local expertise or a lack of enthusiasm among the citizen body. This may also in part reflect the uncertainty that had come to dominate public life in the late 450s in addition to a lack of available manpower, indicating that citizen numbers had not yet recovered from the *stasis* of just a decade earlier. The size of the force defeated at Motyum was probably small and could well have largely consisted of mercenaries hired for the campaign rather than an enforced citizen levy. If so, the decision to appoint another general (Diod. 11.91.2) and send out a second expeditionary force shows that the threat from Ducetius was now considered more serious than before, and that the citizen body was fully mobilised.

In the summer of 450, the Syracusans attacked Ducetius' army, which had halted and was camped at a place named Nomae (Diod. 11.91.3).¹⁹ There was a prolonged and bitter fight, which resulted in the Sicels being pursued from the field; and although there were heavy casualties on both sides, Ducetius' ambitions, as a result of a single engagement, were at once in ruins. Ducetius escaped with a few followers, while survivors among the Sicels retreated to their hilltop forts. The Acragantines regained control of their fortress at Motyum and combined their forces with those of Syracuse. Ducetius, sensing that those who had remained with him were about to hand him over to the enemy as a price for their own safety, slipped away at night and came to Syracuse. He appears to have gained access to the city and made his way to the agora, where he sat at the

¹⁸ This became a commonplace in later times, for example, the appointment of the Campanian Nypsius by Dionysius II, see further in Chapter 8.

¹⁹ See Green (2006) 175 and n. 378 referring to Adamesteanu (1962) for the possible site.

altars to the gods (Diod. 11.92.1) and became a suppliant to the victors of the recent warfare. At daybreak the citizens were surprised to see this well-known figure now very much a victim of circumstances and fortune. The magistrates convened an assembly of the citizen body, in which the discussion focussed on how to deal with Ducetius. Some were in favour of immediate execution, but wiser counsellors urged that offence ought not to be caused to the gods whose protection Ducetius had sought. A unanimous decision was taken to spare the life of Ducetius, but to have him exiled to Corinth, where he was to remain on a pension provided by Syracuse (Diod. 11.92.3–4).²⁰

It is noticeable that details about the war between Ducetius and the Greeks are very scanty but that the change in his fortunes received much more coverage. It may be based on some factual material or anecdotal evidence, but there are some elements that cannot be accurate. For example, Ducetius' arrival in the city seems a trifle far-fetched, since he was not challenged before he reached the agora. However, it is possible that he had personal contacts in the city and that these gave him help and then engineered his removal to Corinth. Ducetius' ability as a general also seems to be highly exaggerated, since his Sicel chiefdom collapsed after just one encounter on the battlefield. He obviously had few resources and not a particularly sophisticated war machine. His initial successes were based on the lack of opposition from the Sicilian Greek cities – especially Syracuse and Acragas – that had become self-absorbed and that failed to maintain the military resources they had possessed under their tyrants, but when all were threatened there was a rapid move to reassert dominance. Ducetius' primacy lasted considerably less than five years.

However, the story of Ducetius does not end with him sailing away into comfortable retirement in mainland Greece. He re-emerges in Diodorus' narrative under the year 446 (12.8.1), where it appears he had convinced the Corinthians that, inspired by the gods, he should be allowed to establish a new settlement on the north coast of Sicily.²¹ He appears to have been in a position to finance or hire one or more ships and he set off with a number of followers, including a number of Sicels, and landed on the island to set about making a new community.²² The absence of any attempt by the Syracusans to prevent Ducetius

²⁰ For plausible reasons for such generous treatment, see Green (2006) 176 and n. 380.

²¹ *Cale Acte* refers to that stretch of the northern coast between Himera and Tyndaris where there was little or no Greek settlement. The location later occupied by Cephaloedium (modern Cefalù) is perhaps the place meant, but see also Adamesteanu (1962) 190–96; Lentini et al. (2002) 79–108 for Caronia as the site of this town.

²² Diodorus, 12.8.2, notes the presence of at least one citizen, named Archonides, from Herbita in the west of the Island. Herbita was a Sicanian community and Archonides is described as a leading figure, so he must have joined the expedition with others from his community. The settlers were therefore a particularly heterogeneous group drawn from Greek and Sicilian ethnic backgrounds.

from arriving in Sicily brought a new conflict with Acragas. The Acragantines accused their neighbours of allowing Ducetius to return to Sicily without first informing them. Diodorus also comments (12.8.3) that the Acragantines ‘bore a grudge’ against the Syracusans and that this was considered to be sufficient to declare a war. Diodorus has clearly missed some vital detail here, for Ducetius’ freedom alone would not have driven these two states into a war. Both cities now were governed by their *demos* and neither would have been inclined to go to war for such a trivial matter. However, it is probably the site of Ducetius’ new town that was the key to the issue. Ducetius had first obtained the permission of the Corinthians to sail to Sicily and he was probably also granted some financial support, whether from official or private means. The close relationship that Corinth retained with Syracuse means that, at the very least, the Syracusans were aware of Ducetius’ movements and they acquiesced, as Diodorus states. The possibility of a Corinthian-funded settlement on the ‘Fair Shore’ may well have been too attractive a proposition for Syracuse to reject. The chance of having some say in a new and potentially lucrative venture would have come as welcome relief to a city that had had its fair share of instability in the previous two decades. At the same time, this new harbour would have infringed on the territory of Himera, to the west, which was still within the political sphere of Acragas. This would account for the Acragantine ‘grudge’ against Syracuse and it would have been sufficient to drive these Greek cities into a major outbreak of hostilities.

It is said that the other Greek communities were evenly divided between those supporting Syracuse and others Acragas (Diod. 12.8.4); and the armies that came to battle reflected their remarkable powers. The conflict is said to have occurred near the Himera River and the local community was defeated, losing in the process a thousand of their troops. The battle that had such a bitter origin seems to have been followed rapidly by the restoration of peaceful conditions between the two cities. Diodorus has delivered an extremely terse summary of an event that must have occupied much of the summer of 446 and there appears little to be gleaned from the material provided in the narrative. Nonetheless, there are two clues that might yield interesting additional detail. The first is the location of the Himera River, which may either have been close to the city of Himera on the north coast of Sicily, and therefore close to the new town founded by Ducetius, or it was the river that marked the frontier between Acragas and Gela. Both sites are possible and both have intriguing possibilities. If the battle took place near Himera, this would indicate that Ducetius’ new town was in a disputed area; and since he must have been supported by Syracuse, this would have been regarded by Acragas as intrusion in that city’s sphere of influence. If the battle occurred near the south coast, this would imply that, far from being aggressive in this action, the Acragantines were in fact in a defensive position and it was the Syracusans who were advancing

into their enemy's territory. In both cases, it appears that Syracuse was actually the aggressor and perhaps this shows that the Syracusans were trying to regain the power they had lost since the mid-460s. Still, caution is again indicated, for the second clue about the importance and historicity of this episode lies in the total given for the casualties named here. A thousand killed in such a supposedly significant battle that involved two great powers is hardly credible if a rout is taken into consideration. Therefore, the size of the forces was almost certainly far smaller than the vague assertion of Diodorus; and what is more likely to have taken place is another small-sized engagement of the kind referred to on more than one occasion after the fall of the Deinomenid tyranny – smallish armies with small numbers killed in the conflicts. And the ease with which peace was restored points to the usual sort of border dispute and rivalry between neighbours but not on as major a scale as, for example, Gelon's campaign in 480. Still, it seems possible that by the mid-440s there were some in Syracuse who had hopes of regaining a dominant place in Sicily and were perhaps testing out capabilities and areas where weakness among other cities might be exploited. Indeed, Diodorus states under the year 442 (12.26.3) that the whole of Sicily was experiencing a period of peace under the leadership of Syracuse.

Diodorus' final mention of Sicily in his narrative before he takes up Syracusan involvement in the Peloponnesian War in 427 belongs to 440 (12.29.1), but it is not about peace – rather, he writes about a new episode of warfare. So much, then, for another prolonged period of tranquillity on the island! It appears from the evidence, such as it is, that Ducetius was not content to remain simply a citizen, even a leading figure, in the community he had been instrumental in founding. It seems that he had made contacts with former allies and followers in the interior of the island and was making plans to regain the leadership of the Sicels, but that these plans did not come to fruition because he died suddenly (Diod. 12.29.1). Following the brief notice of Ducetius' death, there is a curious passage about the siege and destruction of a city named Trinacria (Diod. 12.29.2). Earlier in Book 11 (90.1–2), Diodorus had described the foundation of a city named Palicē, which had been established by Ducetius at the height of his power. In a brief notice, the historian states:

It happened that the city, because of the quality of the land and the number of its citizens, grew wealthy quickly. Nonetheless, the prosperity of the city did not last for a long time, since it was completely destroyed and remains deserted down to my own time. (Diod. 11.90.1–2)

The historian states that this destruction will be covered in the appropriate place, but he appears not to fulfil this promise. However, it is certainly plausible

to argue that Trinacria and Palicē are one and the same community.²³ The proximity of the notice of Ducetius' death and the fate of this city indicates a strong link between the two, at least in the mind of the writer. Moreover, the name 'Trinacria' is very suggestive, since it surely implies that this city was meant to be an icon for the Sicels. Significantly, whereas all other Sicel communities had acknowledged the leadership of Syracuse (Diod. 12.29.2), Trinacria (Palicē) still managed to maintain its independence. If the geo-political situation had in fact tilted towards Syracusan supremacy again by 440 then it would be understandable that a strong Sicel state in the region that might attract other Sicel communities to its cause would have been a source of concern and reason enough to take action in the form of a military campaign. Diodorus claims that a Syracusan-led army marched against Trinacria and that this city was besieged.

What follows is an extraordinary account full of heroism and pathos, for although the citizens of Trinacria (Palicē) were without allies and heavily outnumbered, they refused to contemplate surrender. Diodorus claims that the city possessed 'many great men' because it had always held the leadership of the Sicels and its most prominent citizens had much experience in warfare. If Trinacria was Palicē then there is a problem with Diodorus' assertion, since this town was founded by Ducetius only just a decade earlier. Palicē cannot have always held a senior position among the wider Sicel community, while Trinacria appears to be a constructed name for a location that is otherwise unknown. Therefore Diodorus or his source is indulging in sensationalising the episode in what appears to be some partisanship towards these people of Sicily in their town of the same name against the more recent Greek arrivals.²⁴ The Sicels, far from being intimidated by the Syracusan show of strength, repelled the attackers, inflicting heavy casualties, but eventually the citizens were overcome and either died fighting or committed suicide rather than being taken as prisoners. The Syracusans are said to have celebrated a famous victory, since the people of Trinacria had never before been defeated; and those taken alive in the sack were sold as slaves, while trophies were sent to Delphi and dedicated to Apollo.²⁵

²³ For further discussion on this issue, see Adamesteanu (1962) 174–81; Green (2006) 172 and n. 371.

²⁴ The Sicels were earlier immigrants than the Greeks and so not indigenous, but obviously they gave their name to the island. The text here suggests that either Diodorus or his source may not have considered himself of Greek origin. Trinacria, of course, is the 'place of the three sides', which described the island; today, it is still portrayed on Sicilian flags in the form of the three legs interlinked.

²⁵ Unlike Hieron's famous dedication to the god after his victory over the Etruscans, which is corroborated by epigraphic and archaeological evidence, there is unluckily no trace of a subsequent votive offering for the triumph over Trinacria. This further indicates a probable invention, since the Syracusans were noted for their dedications to Apollo at Delphi.

Yet this Sicel town cannot have been a place of that much importance, since it was either of a recent foundation or soon became a deserted site. Still, Trinacria was apparently still known to Diodorus. There is quite clearly some element of exaggeration in the reports about the size of this town and the power its citizens were supposed to command. Moreover, the date of this resurgence in Syracusan power should also be treated with caution, since it follows a war with Acragas, which also looks as if it has been greatly magnified in significance. Diodorus (12.30.1) notes that, as a direct result of the victory over the Sicels in 440, the power of Syracuse increased sharply. The Syracusans now had a fleet of 100 triremes built, while the capability of the army, especially the cavalry, was also increased. With the Sicels of the interior all subdued, the political elite in Syracuse seem to have become intent on their city regaining a position as the first city of Sicily. This also suggests that, after the Syracusan citizens regained their city, a long period of reconstitution began after 460, but that this was accompanied with a strong militarisation alongside the democratic political element in order that the community should achieve again the place it had enjoyed under the tyrants.²⁶

²⁶ On the limitations of this democratic element, see Green (2006) 142 and n. 276.

Chapter 5

The First Athenian Expedition (427–424 BC)

Following Diodorus' comments about Syracusan rearmament at the end of the 440s, there is no further mention of Sicilian and specifically Syracusan affairs until 427, when the Athenians decided to send a small fleet of 20 warships into Sicilian waters (Thuc. 3.86.1).¹ Diodorus (12.41.1) states that he had used Ephorus as his source for the cause of the war between Athens and Sparta that began in 431 and he does not appear to have employed Thucydides for his narrative.² It is therefore useful here to have two independent accounts of events in Sicily, but differences between them will be the subject of discussion.

The background to Athenian interest in Sicily is as follows. According to both Thucydides (3.86.1) and Diodorus (12.53.1), Leontini and Syracuse were at war. The cause is not stated by either, but in Diodorus' account an army from Syracuse had attacked the city and its defenders were in a desperate condition. Diodorus writes that a legation was sent from Leontini to Athens, soliciting military aid against the aggressor. When this delegation arrived, the senior envoy named as the rhetorician Gorgias won over the Athenian *demos* with an oration full of novelty and sophisticated wordplay; and so it was decreed that help would be sent to Leontini. Thucydides (3.86.2) does not note that any representatives from Leontini sailed to Greece, but rather that it was the allies of this city, namely Rhegium, Camarina and other Ionian communities, that sent messengers to Athens requesting help against Syracuse.³ The positive response to the request for aid masked a more sinister ambition, for both Thucydides and

¹ It would have been interesting, for example, to know whether Syracuse adopted a neutral stance in the war between Corcyra and Corinth, states with which the Syracusans had a strong affinity, or if there was support for one side over the other. No mention remains of any political stance or military undertaking in the middle of the 430s.

² There is a single reference to Thucydides' history at 13.42.5 under the year 411, with the note that this was where that historian's composition ended. A copy of Thucydides' history was almost certainly available to Diodorus, but Diodorus chose not to refer to it. On Diodorus and Thucydides, see Green (2006) 24–5.

³ Thucydides mentions 'other Chalcidian cities', but this is problematic since by this time in eastern Sicily these would have consisted of only Catane and perhaps not even Messene. The citizens of Camarina later in the war desired to be regarded as a neutral city; Camarina neither had a large population nor did it occupy a really well-defensible location. Moreover, Camarina was clearly also not an Ionian city, containing citizens whose origins were mostly Geloan, hence Dorian.

Diodorus reflect on the ulterior motives of the Athenians. For Thucydides, there was a cogent economic reason for the expedition, in that Athenian control or blockade of the Sicilian Greek harbours would deprive the Peloponnese of vital grain supplies. This in fact seems to have been achieved very quickly, since the Sicilian cities appear to have put up little in the way of resistance to this strategy. It would also have ultimately caused the ruin of the economy of these cities, unless the intention was to divert the movement of grain from the Peloponnese to Attica. This is not recorded, but it would seem to be the logical outcome of the overall Athenian objective. However, a second major outbreak of the deadly epidemic (Thuc. 3.87.1) that had affected Athens since the second year of the war (Thuc. 2.47–54) must also have resulted in a diminished reservoir of manpower. The invaders would not have been able to complete their aims with a fleet of just 20 triremes and a force comprising about 4,000 rowers and hoplites in total. Therefore, the Athenians at this stage did not contemplate an occupation of Sicily, nor could they even maintain an indefinite blockade of the ports. Both Thucydides (3.86.4) and Diodorus (12.54.1) claim that the expedition was to ascertain whether or not, in the long term, Athenian control of the entire island was feasible. Such a small show of force should not have been of much concern to the Syracusans if, as Diodorus had earlier written, they had planned to build a fleet of 100 triremes. In fact, the unexpected seems to have been the case, for the Syracusans did not venture to attack the invaders at all, rather retaining what ships they possessed in their harbours. Therefore, the question that begs an answer is, how many warships did the Syracusans in fact possess in 427?

The Athenians supplemented their fleet with a further 20 ships provided by their allies, mainly Rhegium, and they captured a further five ships after an attack on the harbour of Locri, the most loyal and longstanding ally of Syracuse in Magna Graecia. Diodorus then states that another 40 triremes arrived from Athens under the command of Eurymedon and Sophocles, which brought the total number to 80 and therefore represented a sizeable and powerful force. The Athenians had some successes against the citizens of Lipara and Mylae, both allied to Syracuse, but they withdrew their forces when it was learned that the leadership of Leontini and the Syracusans had come to a peace agreement in which the latter recognised the former as fellow citizens (Diod. 12.54.7). But Diodorus, or Ephorus, has misrepresented the situation by placing the entire Athenian expedition into a single year under 427 (Diod. 12.54.4–7), when in fact, as Thucydides relates (3.86, 88, 90, 103, 115–116; 4.1–2, 24–5, 58–65), the Athenians were present in the region until sometime in 424 and so for at least three full campaigning seasons. Thucydides states that the Athenians arrived in the Straits late in the summer of 427; in concert with the Rhegians, they attacked Lipara but were unable to take the town – and so they withdrew. In the summer of 426, one of the two

Athenian commanders, Charoeades, was killed during the course of a battle with the Syracusans, but no details are provided by Thucydides (3.90). There is no mention of an engagement at sea, but it may have taken place near Megara Hyblaea; and if it did, it was the sole naval engagement of that year.⁴ Without further information, there is no way of knowing the size of a Syracusan fleet or indeed even the outcome of the battle. It seems likely that the Syracusans were defeated, since the Athenians retained unhampered movement on the sea. That much is clear and accounts for the Athenians being able to launch an assault on Mylae, later in the same campaigning season. Mylae is described as 'belonging to the citizens of Messene' (Thuc. 3.90.2).⁵ This must mean that Rhegium had lost control of its neighbour on the Sicilian side of the Straits, and that Messene had recently become allied with Syracuse. This quite abrupt turnaround in diplomatic relationships may be attributed to a deliberate desire to distance the city from its former link with Rhegium and the rule of Anaxilas and his sons. The democracy in Syracuse may have been regarded as a welcome change in an ally, besides which the population of Messene was by this time probably dominated by settlers from the Peloponnese and hence ethnically at some odds with the ruling elite across the Straits, which maintained its Ionian ties with Attica. The garrison at Mylae, which appears to have been a fortress rather than a civic community, consisted of two contingents of Messenian citizens; and these attempted to ambush the Athenians and their allies when they landed on a nearby beach. This plan backfired on the defenders, who were given a severe beating and not only lost a number of their troops but were chased back into the fort and were then forced to surrender. The Athenians then marched against Messene itself and used these prisoners as a shield to intimidate those in the city, which also capitulated to the attackers. When the Messenians came to terms with the Athenians, this meant that the Straits now fell under the control of the invaders; but no military response is reported from Syracuse, which seems to have lamely accepted the fait accompli.

Towards the end of 426, the Athenians decided to use Messene as a base from which to launch an overland attack on Inessa (Thuc. 3.103.1), and it is certainly possible that their intention was, having taken this town, to move from there to relieve Leontini. Inessa had evidently been recaptured by the Syracusans after its brief spell under the rule of Ducetius. The town was probably still mostly inhabited by Sicels, but a Syracusan garrison occupied the acropolis (Thuc. 3.103.1). The Athenians and their allies, Messenians and Rhegians presumably, attacked but were unable to secure the citadel of

⁴ Pearson (1987) 27.

⁵ The proximity of the two engagements suggests that the Athenians may have divided their forces between Charoeades and Laches. Simcox (1875) 104 suggested that Laches, once freed from the restraints of a fellow general, pursued the campaign more vigorously.

Inessa and so decided to retreat to Messene. The Athenians were evidently in the vanguard with the allies following up behind; and these were targeted by the Syracusans, who had given chase from Inessa. The Athenians' allies were heavily routed and the whole campaign appears to have ended in a dismal failure. The scale of this defeat may have been the cause of the later rupture in the alliance between the Messenians and the Athenians, who, because of their small numbers, may also have chosen to avoid further inland operations.⁶ Thucydides then states that Laches led the Athenians on a naval attack against Locri, but this too appears to have been on a small scale, with little strategic purpose other than the pursuit of some plunder after a skirmish with just 300 enemy troops near the River Caicinus.⁷ Perhaps, early in 425, according to Thucydides the same winter as the events he has described earlier, the Athenians launched a raid from their ships in the territory of Himera, while some Sicel allies attacked from inland. No details are recorded; and it seems likely that very little was achieved, since the Athenians left and made a second raid on Lipara before returning to their base at Rhegium (Thuc. 3.115.2). When he arrived, Laches found that Pythodorus, his replacement as leader of the expedition, had arrived with a small number of additional warships in response to urgent requests from the allies for a more substantial show of force. The allied delegates had argued that Syracuse was in clear control of the land in most parts of the island and that there was a lack of real progress, although at that stage they were not active on the sea because of the presence of the small Athenian and allied fleet. Still, it had been reported that the Syracusans were now in the process of collecting a fleet in order to reclaim the seas around Sicily. This must indicate that they had been defeated by Charoeades. The Athenians, in turn, had responded positively, sending on Pythodorus in advance while his two colleagues Sophocles and Eurymedon were to follow behind with the bulk of the navy. Pythodorus appears to have wanted to illustrate a new urgency in the campaign by attacking a fortress inside Locrian territory before the winter ended, but this too ended with a defeat and an ignominious retreat (Thuc. 3.115.6).

In all this time, the Syracusans with their much-vaunted military power made no attempt to come to the aid of their allies when these, Lipara, Mylae and Locri, would all have to be supplied by sea. It was only in the early summer of 425, nearly a year after the Athenians had ventured close to Syracuse, that a flotilla of 10 warships set sail from the city to the Straits (Thuc. 4.1.1). This can hardly

⁶ Simcox (1875) 120.

⁷ Note that Thucydides, 3.103, writes of plunder consisting of 'some arms', but Diodorus, if the event he describes is the same, 12.54.4, states that five Locrian ships were captured. Diodorus places this episode before the attack on Mylae, so he may refer to an earlier episode.

be described as an impressive fleet, but these rendezvoused with about the same number of ships from Locri. And they seem to have caught the Athenian and Rhegian forces off guard, since they were able to enter the harbour of Messene. They were greeted with enthusiasm by the Messenians, who are said to have then returned to their alliance with Syracuse. It seems a rather strange move, since only the year before the Syracusans had caused the death of a significant number of Messenian citizens, but this hostile act was clearly regarded as a lesser evil than continuing to support the Athenians. Thucydides suggests that the Syracusans prompted this change of heart because they needed the harbour of Messene as a base and because they knew that command of the Straits was the key not only to any successful invasion of Sicily but also for preventing any further incursions by the Athenians. The Locrians are said to have been willing allies of Syracuse because they wished to attack Rhegium from Messene and at the same time launch raids from their own territory overland. They were helped in their designs, says Thucydides (4.1), by a number of exiles from Rhegium, which had apparently been in a state of *stasis* for some time and could therefore only offer limited resistance to these attacks. The Locrians caused extensive damage to the land around Rhegium, then they returned to their own city, leaving warships at Messene and outfitting more to augment their fleet for a future encounter with the enemy. However, among all this military activity there is no mention of the fleet still led by Pythodorus and still waiting for the major reinforcements promised by the Athenian *demos*.

Where were the Athenians while all this fighting was taking place? It is possible that Pythodorus' interest lay further along the north coast of Sicily, leading the fleet in that direction and so leaving the Syracusans with an ideal opportunity to seize Messene and the Straits. It seems incomprehensible that the Athenians would not have engaged their enemy in order to safeguard their position unless they were absent. It should furthermore be noted that the Syracusan warships plus their Locrian allies were fewer in total than the Athenian fleet and their Rhegian allies. The opportunity to engage and destroy the enemy should surely have been irresistible to Pythodorus. Instead, the entire Locrian campaign against Rhegium was probably completed in as little as two weeks, since neither an attack nor a siege of the city is recorded and little except for plunder seems to have been gained. The retreat of the Locrians could also easily have been prompted by the imminent return of the Athenians, since the hostilities seem to have been broken off abruptly and they and the Syracusans appear to have regained their strongholds rather than staying in open country or on the open seas.

When Thucydides returned to his account of Sicilian affairs (4.24–5), it is clear that the Syracusans now had acquired further ships available for duty in the Straits and were intent on challenging the Athenians to fight. The Syracusans were in an optimistic mood because they knew that the Athenians

no longer possessed a full complement of ships. Moreover, Thucydides provides the additional information that the Athenian reinforcements, commanded by Sophocles and Eurymedon, that were en route to Sicily were actually delayed since they were engaged in the blockade of the Spartan garrison on Sphacteria at Pylos in the Peloponnese.⁸ The Syracusans believed that a victory over the combined Athenian and Rhegian fleet would allow them to invest Rhegium, the citizens of which were clearly not unanimous in their support of their mainland Greek allies. If they took the city and its harbour, it would give Syracuse control of the Straits, just as the Athenians under Laches had recently accomplished. And such an objective successfully accomplished would make it almost impossible for the Athenians to operate freely in the region. They would not have access to any good harbour within easy reach of Sicily; and to obtain one, they would have to organise an assault and siege of one of the cities that had changed alliance. Both the ease with which Messene was taken by Syracuse and the civil unrest noted by Thucydides at Rhegium suggest unhappiness with the Athenian presence, perhaps due to excessive demands for aid and a certain degree of arrogant behaviour from the Athenians towards communities, when they should actually have been supportive and conciliatory.⁹

Thucydides claims (4.25) that the ensuing engagement was reluctantly accepted by the Syracusans because one of its ships, possibly a merchant vessel rather than a trireme, was labouring in the Straits and appeared to be about to be taken by the enemy. The time was late in the day when the Syracusan and Locrian fleet of 30 warships emerged from the harbour at Messene to face 'sixteen Athenian and eight Rhegian' ships and the first naval battle of this campaign took place.¹⁰ The Syracusans lost one of their ships and then each side retreated to its respective port when the darkness of night made further fighting out of the question. Soon afterwards, the Locrian contingent of 10 warships returned to its home base, but the Syracusan fleet with other allies (Thuc. 4.25.3) moved north to Cape Pelorus yet remained inside Messenian territory.¹¹ There they met up with an infantry force that had arrived from Syracuse; and the fleet beached and was left unguarded while navy and army fraternised. The Athenians must have been cruising north from Rhegium, since lookouts must have sighted the enemy fleet on the beach. It was decided to launch a sudden attack, but the

⁸ Simcox (1875) 161.

⁹ Thucydides' comments, 4.24, deal with the geographical and legendary context of the Straits, but his lack of clarity about what was happening there at this time probably supports the contention raised here.

¹⁰ At least four and perhaps as many as seven or eight Athenian ships seem to have missed this encounter, possibly because they were under repair at Rhegium or on some other duty.

¹¹ Thucydides must mean that some Messenian ships accompanied the Syracusan fleet, which now numbered just 20 triremes, although these may have been smaller vessels.

Syracusans reacted swiftly and captured an opposing trireme through the use of grappling hooks from the shore. The Athenian crew escaped by jumping into the sea and swimming for safety. After this, the Athenian forces seem to have retreated and the Syracusan fleet was free to be 'warped' along the coast towards Messene when it was attacked again.¹² Once again, the Syracusans responded with surprising determination, rowing away from the beach and charging the enemy with the result that the Athenians lost a second warship. The Athenians apparently withdrew and the Syracusan fleet made a triumphant entry into Messene. The point to bear in mind here, however, is that these engagements were little more than skirmishes between two naval forces of very modest size, and not the battles one might expect from two major states.

Soon after this setback, the Athenians sailed down the coast to Camarina, since they had received news that this city was about to be handed over to the Syracusans by a citizen named Archias. It certainly seems evident that internal unrest was affecting a number of the Greek communities, with groups in each seeing the possibility of fulfilling political ambitions by allying themselves with either Athens or the Syracusans. While the Athenian fleet was absent, the Messenians decided to launch an attack on Naxos. This city is not mentioned as being involved in the warfare before 425, but since it was ethnically linked to Leontini and Catane it must have been an enticing objective for the Messenians now allied again with Syracuse. The Messenians clearly came in force both by land and by sea; and although the Naxians went out to meet the attackers, they were defeated and retreated behind their fortifications. The Messenian army is said to have looted the surrounding countryside while their fleet made incursions along the River Acesines, further to the south, but they were unable to capture Naxos itself.¹³ And when certain Sicel allies of Naxos appeared in the vicinity, the besieged made a sudden sortie, caught the Messenians by surprise, and in the following rout killed about a thousand enemy troops. The Messenian army retired in considerable disarray and lost heavily in their retreat to Messene because they were continually harassed by the Sicel tribesmen, and most were killed. Thucydides further reveals that the fleet that had sailed down the coast accompanying the Messenian army was not composed of ships of Messene alone, since when these had regained the safe waters of the harbour at Messene various contingents returned to their own ports. This must mean that the fleet contained warships from Syracuse and Locri. Although the citizens of Leontini had played no part in the victory over the Messenian land forces, they now decided to attack Messene, believing that the city's defences had been drastically weakened by the losses suffered in the recent fighting. Therefore, they

¹² Simcox (1875) 162.

¹³ The Acesines/Akesines River is identified with the modern River Alcantara, which enters the sea south of Naxos but rises to the north of Mount Etna, Pliny, *NH.* 3.88: 'Asines'.

and other allies, perhaps including the local Sicels and the Naxians, the latter bent on revenge for the damage done to their lands, marched rapidly north and appeared to have been supported by the Athenian fleet, which sailed into the harbour of Messene. The Messenians were not, however, to be cowed by recent reverses; and the troops garrisoning the city together with some Locrian forces made a sortie in much the same way that the Naxians had done only some days earlier. This show of exuberance caught the attackers off their guard; and, with their commander Demoteles in the forefront of the charge, the Messenians put the greater part of the army of Leontini to flight and inflicted heavy casualties on their enemy.¹⁴ At this late stage, the Athenians evidently intervened by beaching their triremes and joining in the fight, attacking the Messenians who were in pursuit of the Leontinian troops and who now in the confusion retreated in equal disorder behind their walls. The Athenians set up a trophy to celebrate this victory and sailed across to Rhegium.¹⁵

Compared to the detail devoted to this fairly insignificant event, Thucydides fails entirely to reveal what occurred in Camarina when the Athenians arrived there. In light of his subsequent account of efforts, eventually successful, to obtain Sicilian unity, it seems likely that the city had already become allied to Syracuse by the time the Athenian fleet arrived there and they had departed again empty-handed. This would account for their enthusiasm in joining in the battle at Messene, to at least salvage some glory from their recent campaigns, which had singularly failed to accomplish anything of real strategic value. The diplomatic position of Camarina seems to be at the root of Thucydides' statement that, although the Sicilian Greeks continued to fight among themselves, for the time being the Athenians took no further part in this episode and presumably stayed at or close to Rhegium in anticipation of further warships arriving from the Peloponnese. The main belligerents in the war were Syracuse and its allies Messene and Locri, and now Camarina on the one hand and the former Ionian settlements of Naxos, Catane and Leontini on the other.

Thucydides (4.58–65) returned again to events in Sicily and Magna Graecia only after he finished his coverage of the great Athenian coup over the Spartans at Pylos.¹⁶ He states that in the summer of 425 there was a peace between the

¹⁴ Thucydides' note of the Messenian commander is of interest when the engagement was a rather small-scale affair. It is therefore possible that the historian had first-hand information about this general or had seen him himself. If Demoteles was a Messenian then he may have been born in the Peloponnese or have been a mercenary from that region.

¹⁵ The use of the trophy as a visible indicator of a triumph was clearly susceptible to misuse, and seems often to have been nothing more than a propaganda exercise. Thucydides makes frequent note of such occurrences in his narrative. In this instance, the Messenians were hardly in a worse position than the Leontinians. See also Appendix 4.

¹⁶ Pylos was obviously a sensational victory for the Athenians, especially the capture of 120 Spartiate hoplites. However, the Athenian catastrophe at Syracuse was on quite a

Geloans and Camarina. No mention has been made of hostilities between these two communities, which were probably related to the usual border disputes that were endemic among the Greek Sicilian cities. It should be noted that Gela was usually in alliance with Syracuse and Camarina was populated either with former Syracusans or with Geloans. Some issues had clearly arisen between Camarina and its neighbours that the Athenians hoped to exploit to further their campaign. A settlement with a harbour allied to Athens in the south-eastern sector of the island would have been of considerable use. The failure to win over Camarina was a blow to the Athenians' objectives from which their expedition does not appear to have recovered.¹⁷

A peace between Gela and Camarina brought further diplomatic moves between the two warring Sicilian groups, which go some way to explaining Athenian inactivity while these were taking place. Thucydides appears to indicate that Gela took the lead here and invited delegates to a congress to discuss a way forward to end the infighting – which could only cause economic hardship and unrest – and so to establish a possible peace. The conference was convened and delegates from the various cities made their views and demands known, but Thucydides provides just a single speech, that which is attributed to Hermocrates, son of Hermon (Thuc. 4.58). This speech must have been inserted into the narrative at this point during the general revision of the text; it is considered to have taken place after the end of the Peloponnesian War in 404, and after the devastating defeat of Athens. It is therefore interesting for the fact that it is delivered almost as if it is a eulogy on the career of Hermocrates, who is shown to be a model of moderation and conciliation but who, in 425, cannot have been the highly influential, and to many the threatening, figure he became in Syracuse.¹⁸ It is also a reflection on the greatness of his city, but a position that it clearly did not possess even in the mid-420s. It is furthermore a highly politicised comment on the ambitions of the Athenians for the conquest

different scale. It should be noted that Thucydides' general lack of interest in Sicilian affairs prior to 415 is curious. Still, Diodorus provides little additional material.

¹⁷ Freeman (1891–94) 3.41 considered that the Camarinaeans maintained their neutrality during this period, a position they certainly held in 415; although by the following year they were allies of Syracuse. Short-lived alliances seem to have been the norm rather than the exception in Sicily. The fact that Camarina appears to have denied the Athenians their harbour, even though they were a much smaller community than either Messene or Rhegium, indicates possible Syracusan intervention there in 425 or that the invaders were prepared to respect a neutral state in the hope of later cooperation.

¹⁸ Hermocrates clearly did not have much enthusiasm for or faith in the efficacy of the assembly of the citizens. Maybe this was because it did not function well? Alternatively, perhaps it was because he was by origin of the elite and hence suspicious of this governmental organ. Certainly he has been portrayed as desiring sole power in later histories, hence the tradition about him is possibly contaminated by writers such as Timaeus.

of Sicily, which was probably not fully formulated in the minds of public figures as early as the mid-420s but rather emerged later in the rhetoric employed by those such as Alcibiades in Athens in the debate about the value of sending a further expedition against Syracuse in 415.

Typically for Thucydides' speeches, it is long and detailed; and if it is a reasonable reflection of what might have been said on this occasion by the speaker, it is clearly aimed at reconciliation of the warring parties.¹⁹ Hermocrates pointed out that the fighting brought benefits to some, who were therefore prepared to take the chances needed to gain these, while to others any losses were endured in the hope of retrieving the situation later. But if all participants were starting to experience the latter then it was time to seek a negotiated settlement from which all would stand to gain something positive, for the alternative was unending strife (Thuc. 4.59). Hermocrates next raised the vexed issue of the incessant Dorian–Ionian conflicts, which he sought to reduce by advocating a single ethnicity based on a common place of residence and not resulting from former origins (Thuc. 4.60.1). As a result of this mix of mutual distrust and infighting, the Athenians had taken advantage of alliances made unwittingly and he sensed that they were about to take this opportunity to expand their empire. If the Greeks in Sicily exhausted themselves and their resources by making war against one another, the Athenians would then be able to take overall control with little difficulty. If the cities of Sicily wished to remain free, they would need to cooperate with one another and avoid becoming subjects just like the members of the former Delian League, which had become in all but name an empire of Athens. The Sicilian Greeks, in Hermocrates' estimation, needed to stand together and not allow future interests to be based on hope in an uncertain future (Thuc. 4.62.4). When the fear of the way ahead was coupled with the more immediate threat of the Athenian presence, the solution to this combined danger to their lives and independence was to seek support from one another in a common peace and give the invaders no reason to further interfere in the politics of the Sicilian Greek communities. Hermocrates concluded his speech with an appeal that fears of Athenian domination should override rivalry between the Sicilian Greeks, whether they were of Dorian or Ionian (Chalcidic) origin, and that they should settle a peace and then demand that the mainland Greeks should return to their own city. If they took his advice, he noted that, while those free people who lived in Sicily, whom he termed 'Siciliots' (Thuc.

¹⁹ There is no way of knowing whether or not Hermocrates actually spoke at all or even if there was a congress at Gela, for this is not corroborated by Diodorus in Book 12. Thucydides' speech for Hermocrates is inserted quite naturally into the narrative at 4.58 and related from 4.59–64. The historian elsewhere does not expect his reader to believe that these are verbatim records; they were simply appropriate to the time, place and context, and therefore it must be assumed that Thucydides wanted his audience/reader to believe that the congress was a historical event.

4.64.3), might or even were likely to feud among each other, they would in the event of alien invasion always unite to repel such an event. For the present time, he stressed (Thuc. 4.64.5) that the end of internal war and the expulsion of the Athenians could only be to everyone's benefit.

Hermocrates' suggestions were immediately adopted and each of the Greek communities was to retain its current possessions, except that the citizens of Camarina were to receive the settlement of Morgantina from the Syracusans provided they supplied a stipulated payment (Thuc. 4.65.1). This additional and exceptional provision may have something to do with the role of the Camarinacians in obtaining this settlement, although it was held at Gela at apparently the instigation of the Geloans. Morgantina was a Sicel community and had obviously passed into Syracusan control some time after the defeat and exile of Ducetius. It was not situated close to Camarina and it seems a little improbable that this community had the manpower and wealth to control an isolated town in the centre of the island. Thucydides perhaps betrays some lack of geographical knowledge about Sicily and has accepted uncritically some information from a source that was either incorrect or lacking in precision. As soon as the congress ended, those former allies, primarily Leontini, summoned the Athenian generals to inform them of the outcome, adding that they expected them to abide by the agreement. The Athenians, although in a stronger position militarily than they had been throughout the entire campaign, could easily have envisaged difficulties in mounting attacks on a united Sicily; they probably considered that they needed a fresh mandate from the fellow citizens and so set sail for home. Once they arrived in Athens, all three generals were accused of complicity with the enemy; Pythodorus and Sophocles were exiled for receiving bribes, while Eurymedon was fined.

Diodorus' account (12.54.6–7) has far less depth but nonetheless gives some possible additional detail that is ignored by Thucydides in an apparent desire either to highlight the alleged prominent role of Hermocrates or to invent his participation.²⁰ Diodorus ignores the episode of a meeting at Gela and any participation of Hermocrates or any mention of his role as a leading figure in Syracusan public affairs.²¹ Instead, he states that, although the Athenians and

²⁰ Since the source of Diodorus must also have ignored any intervention by Hermocrates at this stage, it is certainly possible that his activities were enhanced by Thucydides.

²¹ Freeman (1892) 3.631–6 was convinced that Thucydides' speech was based on the actual words or arguments expressed by Hermocrates and that the contents were relayed to the historian by the Syracusan. It is possible that they met, that Hermocrates related his role and speech, and that it was recorded by Thucydides, who then a decade or more later added this material to the edited version of his history. More likely, the speech is that of the historian and loosely based on some recollection of what he may have heard. The speech of Hermocrates found in Polybius (12.25k) was reworked and critiqued by the historian from Timaeus. Timaeus perhaps found this in Philistus or, as Freeman (1892) 3.635 thought,

their allies now had a fleet of 80 warships in the immediate theatre of war, the Sicilian Greeks had become tired of the war; and so, behind the backs of their allies, Leontini negotiated a peace treaty with Syracuse. The main stipulation of this agreement was that a synoecism was to take place, and the citizens of Leontini were to be accepted into the *polis* of Syracuse. This appears to be less a peace agreement between equals than a complete victory for the Syracusans, since Leontini was not an ethnic Dorian community; although there may have been perceptible gains to be made by joining a wealthier city and having access to its markets and resources. As a result, the Athenians had been betrayed by the allies who had requested their aid and so their fleet set sail for the mainland. Unlike Thucydides, Diodorus has no account of the generals being suspected of corruption, mentioning simply that they had evidently been outflanked diplomatically and were no longer required by their former allies. In the event that they stayed, it would have been that much more difficult to launch attacks on what was then, for a short time, a united Greek Sicily.

It is notable that, during the period of the Deinomenid tyranny, Syracuse had had complete control of Leontini, but that by the early 420s this community was in a position to repudiate former connections. This assumption runs rather counter to the narrative that claims Syracuse possessed a superior capability in both army and navy. The size and proficiency of the fleet described by Diodorus as being in preparation in 439 appears highly dubious for that specific date when the evidence from Thucydides is also taken into account. He states that the warships of Syracuse numbered just 10 in early summer of 425 and were augmented with another 10. With the Locrian force of another 10 triremes, these allies had a total of just 30 warships. It is therefore not surprising that, when the Athenian forces were augmented to 80 triremes, they took no action after the summer of 425 as this was bound to lead to suspicions of bribery of the generals.

First of all, just who were these leaders of this democracy who seem to have taken great strides in the 440s towards re-establishing Syracuse's power; and was the military might supposedly obtained by the early 430s really historical or a construct based on later military statistics? Not a single Syracusan individual is mentioned before Hermocrates emerges as an influential figure, appearing only in 424 at the end of the first Athenian expedition to Sicily.²²

in Antiochus, but this does not prove its historicity. Diodorus' source Ephorus may in fact provide the more sober account.

²² According to Polybius (12.25k), who took his statement from Timaeus, Hermocrates was the single most influential Syracusan in the period between 478, the death of Gelon, and 344, the rule of Timoleon. The accolade is startling, since, even if they were not well liked, Dionysius I, his son, Dion, Agathocles and Hieron II had a far greater impact on the history of Syracuse. The reference to Hermocrates comes in a passage extremely critical of Timaeus' compositional ability, in that the speech given to the Syracusan is deemed by Polybius to be

By then Hermocrates is clearly presented by Thucydides as a prominent citizen and he may conceivably have been active a full decade and a half earlier, although his recorded actions belong to the decade 415–408. Indeed, prominent individuals at Syracuse only appear in precisely those same years. Moreover, given the weakened state of certainly the naval arm of Syracusan military capability, there appears to have been some contemporary invention of the city's power in the period between 460 and 415. It was only with the defeat of the Athenians that Syracuse really obtained a primacy in Sicily. If Diodorus or his source is accurate in the claim, it is interesting that Antiochus should have chosen this occasion or this year (424) as the conclusion of his history in nine books of Syracuse (Diod. 12.71.2), since it not only introduces Hermocrates, one of the major figures in the city during this period, but also provides an interesting glimpse of contemporary thoughts about the island and the people who lived there. It may not have been force of circumstance in Antiochus' life that caused this history to end in that particular year, but it was an intentional decision because it had a meaning for a citizen of Syracuse. Later in his career, after 413 until his death in 408, Hermocrates is cast as a politician who was considered to favour an oligarchic system of government and even perceived as a man who might conspire to seize supreme power for himself. Hermocrates must have been well connected among the political elite and his predilection for a non-democratic form of government suggests that he was one of a large group with even greater resources. The abolition of *petalism* by or soon after 450 is probably an indication of the strength of those lukewarm to the idea of democracy, suggesting that any resurgent militarism came from that group which viewed success in the field of battle and the subjugation of neighbouring states both in Sicily and beyond as a stepping stone to political control.

The period of 20 years following the foundation of a democratic system of government at Syracuse in about 460 was hardly quiet or without incident. The administration of the city was fraught with tension among the political elite and those who thought they might emulate the Deinomenids. The city was plainly less prosperous than it had been before 466. A debilitating civil war was followed by attempts by local chiefs such as Ducetius to further reduce Syracusan power. The military adventurism cited by Diodorus is almost certainly unhistorical and the creation of a writer who wished to portray this democratic period as one of greatness, equal to that of Athenian democracy and its great period of expansion. Missed by the sources is the certainty that a major internal war in Sicily can only have been even more exhausting for the resources available to the Greek cities, and so a pauperisation of the

more applicable to a child than to a statesman. The fact that Hermocrates figures as one of the great figures of Syracuse's history is not doubted.

communities there is a more realistic scenario than the prosperity vouched for in the literature. Given all these factors, it is not remarkable that there was no major military engagement between the Athenians and the Syracusans between 427 and 424. It is therefore also not remarkable that this 'war' was concluded not by military action but by diplomacy.

Chapter 6

The Second Athenian Expedition (415–413 BC)

The pious hopes expressed by Hermocrates for a longstanding peace in Sicily, in the speech given to him by Thucydides, very conspicuously came to nothing. The citizens of Leontini were again soon at loggerheads with their Syracusan neighbours.¹ Thucydides reports (5.4.4) that the peace between Leontini and Syracuse had broken down by the summer of 422, illustrating that this latest episode of instability on the island began less than two years after the meeting of the cities at Gela.² The Athenians did, in fact, take an immediate interest in this seeming crack in Sicilian Greek solidarity by despatching three envoys, the most senior of whom was Phaeax, a prominent Athenian public figure (Thuc. 5.4.5), in just two ships on a diplomatic mission.³ The account of Thucydides, when compared to that of Diodorus, shows that there was a more complex sequence of events in the aftermath of the 424 peace agreement, which also suggests that the advice of Hermocrates was taken up rather grudgingly by some of the cities. While Diodorus relates a rapid and harmonious integration of Leontinians into Syracusan citizenship, Thucydides recounts first that the citizenship in Leontini was opened to newcomers and that as a result of this addition to the population land was also made available to them from existing property holders. The admission of new citizens may have been intended to reduce the influence of an oligarchic elite,⁴ but the members of these families would surely have been Ionian in their ethnic loyalty and so inclined to maintain their independence from their powerful Dorian neighbour. Admission of new settlers from diverse origins would have diluted loyalties rather than strengthen

¹ Diodorus has no coverage of Sicilian affairs between 424 and the start of the second Athenian intervention in 416/15, but the synoecism he describes is absent in Thucydides' account, which is radically different. Only some of the elite from Leontini were received into the Syracusan community and most of these, it seems, not for long.

² Thucydides does not describe this peace as a *koine eirene*, a term that became the usual description for general peace agreements among the mainland Greeks in the fourth century, but he employs the more neutral verb *συνβαλνω*, to reach an arrangement.

³ Phaeax, son of Erasistratus, has no recorded military career, but he may have been a *strategos* at this time. He was perhaps a contemporary of Nicias rather than of Alcibiades, since there is no mention of him being active in Athens after about 415 and the controversy over the mutilation of the herms. One of the ships may have been the *Paralus* or the *Salaminia*, the two state triremes used for official public business.

⁴ See the comments of C.F. Smith (1921) 3.7 n. 3 to this effect.

them, but probably it was part of ongoing factional strife. The group labelled as oligarchs by Thucydides requested help from Syracuse and had their opponents expelled from the city. If the group pressurising for additional citizens and land reallocation represented the majority in Leontini then the extent of military intervention by Syracuse must have been sizeable. These same oligarchs, possibly because they could not easily defend the city, preferred to abandon it altogether and move to Syracuse on condition that they received the citizenship. Since the other party in the *stasis* had apparently been routed, Leontini was deserted. However, this arrangement did not please all those who had migrated from Leontini and so these evidently returned and occupied Phocaea, a suburb of the city, and an outlying fort named Bricinniae (Thuc. 5.4.4). Large numbers of the other party that Thucydides describes as being of the *demos* joined them and continued the hostilities with Syracuse. Whichever way or source one consults for this episode, the winner in all respects was Syracuse; and as a result of the peace of Gela the city was beginning to adopt once more its former very aggressive policy towards its neighbours. And it was only at this point that Phaeax and his token Athenian presence arrived in Sicily on its fact-finding tour. Thucydides states that the intention was to persuade those Sicilian Greek and Sicels uneasy of this latest show of Syracusan power to make a new alliance and provide aid to Leontini. There is no mention of any Athenian aid at this point, but this must surely have been intimated as a possibility in order to encourage breaking ranks with Syracuse. It is said that the citizens of Camarina and Acragas were amenable to Athenian persuasion, but the Geloans were not. Thucydides appears to indicate that Phaeax went first to Camarina and then to Acragas and finally to Gela, and that the negative response from the Geloans confirmed that the venture seemed doomed to fail. The Athenian party nonetheless then went overland from the south coast into the interior to consult with some of the Sicel communities, visiting Leontini, to whose citizens Phaeax delivered encouraging words, before arriving in Catane. From Catane, Phaeax rejoined the ships and sailed north, still attempting to win over new allies in the region. Somewhere between Catane and Locri, the Athenians met a band of Locrians who had recently been expelled from Messene and were making their way to the city of their birth.⁵ The Athenians let these mercenaries go on their way, since Locri had recently agreed to an alliance with Athens. This city was usually very loyal to Syracuse but had been forced to become an ally of Athens because, says Thucydides (5.5.3), the Locrians were engaged in a serious conflict with their neighbours Hipponium and Medma.

⁵ Thucydides says that these Locrians had been invited into Messene during a period of *stasis* in support of one of the factions that had obtained power, but once this civil unrest had subsided they were no longer required. It is also clear that these mercenaries were en route to Locri somewhere near the Straits.

There are a number of issues in Thucydides' account that are puzzling and require some analysis. The notice is very brief and possibly obtained from another source, perhaps someone who took part in the mission. It is not well conceived and clearly a minor interjection in the overall narrative; it may even have been a later insertion since it stands quite isolated from the main interest here, which is Cleon's campaign in the northern Aegean. For example, the events that are described probably occurred in the late spring or summer of 422, but how did the Athenian party reach Sicily? It was not impossible to sail directly from Attica to Sicily, by crossing the Ionian Sea, but usually ships put in at various points on virtually a daily basis. Phaeax is almost spirited to Sicily, while the previous Athenian expedition and the one that was yet to come took the usual route around the Ionian Sea, crossing to the Iapygian Peninsula from Corcyra and then sailing south. Phaeax may have taken the decision to make the direct crossing to avoid any confrontation with the Syracusans, who could easily have intercepted them but appear to have been completely unaware of the Athenian presence. Moreover, Thucydides' notice of the Athenian route in Sicily makes little sense logistically – first Camarina, then Acragas and finally Gela, before leaving the ships to trek overland then the two triremes to make the highly risky journey along the Syracusan coast to the rendezvous at Catane. It is difficult to imagine Phaeax and the Athenian flotilla sailing up and down the south coast of the island, so it is possible that representatives of Camarina, Acragas and Gela were all present on the same occasion in the last-named city, since Thucydides (5.4.6) explicitly places the Athenians there. Where did Phaeax go after he rejoined his ships? He evidently sailed into the Straits, but there is no mention of Rhegium, which had been one of the staunchest allies of Athens, and Messene is only noted as the former home of the Locrian mercenaries. It was just as well that Locri and the Athenians had concluded an alliance before Phaeax met the Locrian mercenaries returning to their home. The Athenians, seeing their small numbers, would presumably have been overwhelmed by the Locrian hoplites. Thucydides' statement to the effect that a treaty already existed and must have been known to both parties also raises the question of when and how this can have occurred, unless Phaeax took the usual route from mainland Greece to Magna Graecia. Hence the Athenians had visited Locri first, then sailed down the coast of Sicily to Camarina or Gela, and then sailed all the way back again without, it seems, any Syracusan interest in the mission. Finally, Locri is said to have formulated an agreement with the Athenians because of a war with its neighbours. Yet neither Medma nor Hipponium was a major power in the region and they were in any case separated from Locri by the Calabrian highlands, which were controlled by powerful Italic tribal communities later called the Bruttii. There can have been no border fighting between these Greek cities unless they fought at sea, which seems improbable at best. Thucydides' narrative here has a dubious element even if the visit by Phaeax was a real event. Its place in the text may after all be merely

a device to maintain interest in Sicilian affairs, which were very soon to become the whole focus of the historian's work.

Sicilian affairs in the years between 422 and 415 are conspicuously absent and either they did not capture the interest of Thucydides or there was no source available to him for events there.⁶ Nonetheless, the silence in the text for the remainder of what we possess as the fifth book is as a result rather ominous, since it is precisely that lack of any real connection with Sicily or its cities that became almost the pivotal theme in questioning the logic of undertaking what became for the Athenians a catastrophe of the greatest magnitude. An intentional stylistic construction may therefore be present in the narrative and prepares the audience for the ignorance displayed by the Athenian *demos* about Sicily, its inhabitants and the difficulty of waging a war in this region. It is obvious that the vast majority of Athenians would have had no experience or first-hand knowledge of Sicily or Syracuse and hence relied on what they heard in the assembly, in the agora, or from those who traded or visited the island. So the factor of uncertainty of what lay beyond the horizon was always bound to influence the citizen body, but the Greeks as a whole had never shied away from adventure and therefore the opposing emotions of caution and impetuosity were built into Thucydides' narrative as the debate over a major overseas expedition developed.⁷ Thus as Brock and others before him have shown, in the editing of the text Thucydides had already inserted (2.65.1) his opinion of the significance of the Sicilian expedition and its effect on Athenian fortunes. The extensive coverage of the Melian affair (5.84–116) was probably also meant as a preparation for the account of the attack on Syracuse, with its focus on the fate of defeated parties in time of war, a theme that had already occupied the historian's attention when he covered the *stasis* in Corcyra a decade earlier.⁸

As a preface to the narrative in Book 6, Thucydides delivers a brief résumé of the history of Greek settlement in Sicily, probably from the history of Antiochus and inserted in the re-editing process of the text.⁹ From this introduction,

⁶ While affairs on the mainland and around the Aegean might have been absorbing, it is clear that this section of the history lacks detail and covers a broad chronological span. If Thucydides had known Hermocrates, the Syracusan could easily have filled in details for this period.

⁷ See Smith (2004) 33–70 on the lack of awareness of the average Athenian citizen, but the recent foundation of Thurii and the regular interaction at Panhellenic festivals, not to mention trading contacts, must have diminished the isolation of Greek communities around the Mediterranean.

⁸ On the insertion into the narrative in Book 2, see most recently, Brock (2013) 49–50. For the debate about the fate of the Melians, see Brock (2013) 50. Thucydides' coverage of the civil unrest in Corcyra in 427 is contained in Book 3, at 69–85.

⁹ It is impossible to treat this period of Syracuse's history without the sustained use of Thucydides as a source. On the basis that Diodorus employed Sicilian and ultimately



Figure 6.1 The unfinished temple at Segesta. ‘The Segestaeans reminded the Athenians about the alliance that they had made with the people of Leontini from the time of Laches and the last war’ (Thuc. 6.6.2).

Thucydides moves to cover the background to the second – really the third – Athenian intervention in Sicily, the request for aid from Segesta against its neighbour Selinous, and appeals for help from Leontini, which had been virtually destroyed by Syracuse.¹⁰ These two representations were received with

Syracusan histories for his account, the later historian’s evidence will necessarily feature as a corrective here. This does not contradict earlier discussion about the careless nature of Diodorus’ narrative, but it simply underlines the fact that Thucydides cannot be regarded as an infallible guide to events in Sicily.

¹⁰ See Figure 6.1 for the unfinished temple at Segesta. Thucydides concentrates on the appeal for military aid from Segesta, 6.6–8, and mentions only the presence of some citizens from Leontini, whom he describes as exiles and not as envoys, 6.19. Thucydides is almost certainly using the correct description of the representatives, since they were not sent by their city in an official capacity because they were living in exile; and Leontini at this time had remained deserted, since it was last mentioned in the narrative under 422. Diodorus, 12.83.1–2, more closely describes the situation by relating that the exiles from Leontini met with the citizens of Segesta and then, like the Segestaeans, sent delegates to Athens.

sympathy by the Athenian assembly, which voted to send a force of 60 triremes into Sicilian waters commanded by three generals approved by the *demos*: Nicias, Alcibiades and Lamachus. The assembly, which voted for this plan of action, concluded its proceedings and reconvened five days later (Thuc. 6.8.3), when the fine tuning of the expedition's finances and logistics was to be finalised. On this occasion, a heated debate occurred where, on the one hand, the wisdom of despatching a full-scale expeditionary force so far from home was questioned, while on the other hand these fears were countered by suggestions that great advantages could be gained from victory.

It was Nicias who raised the logistical problems of communicating with and sending supplies to a fleet and land forces so far away from their point of departure. However, it is interesting that he did not cite the almost ruinous expedition to Egypt between 460 and 454, when the entire force was lost in the Nile delta, a precedent that would surely have added greater weight to his argument.¹¹ It is possible that he did not raise this issue since the main architect of that venture was Pericles. Yet it was Alcibiades, Pericles' nephew, who was most outspoken in favour of an attack on Syracuse; and although there was a peace treaty in force between Athens and Sparta, Alcibiades pointed out the economic and financial benefits of a successful subjugation of the Sicilian Greek cities, several of whom were already sympathetic to the Athenians. He went even further and enthused about what may seem to a later readership the grandiose plan of expanding the rule (*ἀρχή*) of Athens not only in Sicily but also into Punic Africa by taking on and defeating Carthage.¹² The enthusiasm with which these proposals were received gives some indication of the optimism and confidence that were prevalent among a citizen body that had enjoyed nearly seven years of uninterrupted peace.¹³ More cautious advice was easily ignored; and indeed, many of those who were concerned about committing so much manpower and resources to a single overseas campaign chose to remain silent in case they were accused of being unpatriotic. Nicias had no such qualms and persisted in his opposition to the venture. After Alcibiades and other advocates of action

¹¹ Thucydides (1.104–9) makes no comparison between the two affairs. For a discussion of the Egyptian debacle, see Libourel (1971) 605–15.

¹² The notion that Athenian rule could have been extended as far west as Carthage had already been the subject of mockery in Aristophanes, *Knights*, produced in 424, Anderson (2003) 1–9. It is possible that Thucydides intended to show how short the collective memory was or more likely that Alcibiades was no better than a demagogue such as Hyperbolus, the butt of Aristophanes' joke.

¹³ A peace had been negotiated between Sparta and Athens, the latter represented by Nicias after the campaigns in Thrace around Amphipolis, where both sides had suffered losses. The peace subsequently became known as the 'Peace of Nicias'; and although Sparta and Athens abided by the treaty, there was still considerable warfare in the Peloponnese and in the Aegean, notably the battle of Mantinea in 417 and the siege of Melos in 415.

had spoken, Nicias tried again to dissuade his fellow citizens, by delivering a second speech in which he emphasised the superiority of the Syracusan army and especially its cavalry. He also stressed the need to have under the generals' command as powerful a fleet as possible in order to implement a fully effective blockade of Syracuse. Thucydides, who was not present but who was acquainted with Nicias, relates that his subject employed this tactic in the hope that once the colossal nature of the undertaking was fully appreciated his fellow citizens would have a change of heart and reject the proposal for this expedition. Unluckily for Nicias, the sentiment of the masses was for a foreign adventure and the prospect for each citizen who became involved was of military glory, civic prestige or personal profit.¹⁴

It was plain that the older citizens had forgotten the horrors of war, while the younger clamoured for the chance of going out on a military campaign. Therefore, the request to increase the size and capacity of the expedition was easily confirmed. Nicias may have been dismayed, but he was unable to withdraw from a command with which he would have preferred not to be connected.¹⁵ Preparations were put in place and the allies were required to play their part. All the various groups of the force were to congregate at Corcyra before crossing the Ionian Sea to the Iapygian Peninsula and proceeding south along the coast to Sicily. Thucydides states, 'the first force that sailed was the most impressive and expensive to be drawn entirely from the Greeks and, with its origins in a single city, up to that time had ever set out' (6.31.1). The departure of this armada, which amounted to 100 Athenian triremes, probably in May 415, caused a sensation, not just in Athens where the entire population is said to have come to the harbour at the Piraeus to make its farewells, but also well beyond Attica and the Athenian possessions overseas.¹⁶

Thucydides (6.32.3) meanwhile asks his audience to believe that, just at the same moment, across the Ionian Sea in Syracuse, another debate was taking place. Although news of Athenian activity had been arriving, this was simply regarded

¹⁴ Diodorus, 12.83.5–84.3, reports much of the same information but with far less detail, that Nicias advised against sending an expedition to Sicily while this was strongly advocated by Alcibiades. The forces are described as 5,000 hoplites, and 130 triremes, 100 of which were Athenian, and this agrees substantially with the information provided by Thucydides.

¹⁵ Nicias' entire time as general in this expedition was apparently dogged with ill health. See Kagan (1981) 264 n. 18, suggesting that the kidney complaint noted by Thucydides, 7.15.1, only became more serious during the campaign. If the illness was not longstanding, could Thucydides have inserted this material only after 404 or can the Syracusan exile Hermocrates have been aware of Nicias' condition? Conjecture alone can be advanced here.

¹⁶ Note that, in characteristic fashion, Diodorus provides two sets of figures, 130 ships, 12.84.2, and 140 ships, 13.2.5, which as usual indicates his use of twin sources. The larger figure was obtained by adding the contribution of the allies to the Athenian fleet.

as fictitious. Scepticism or acceptance of the veracity of the reports seemed to have divided the opinions of the citizen body until Hermocrates lent his obvious authority to the discussion, clearly warning his fellow Syracusans that they were under a grave threat of attack. He said that he was better informed than those who were not ready to accept the news that a large Athenian force had been despatched under the pretext of supporting Segesta and Leontini, but that the real reason for the expedition was the capture of Syracuse (Thuc. 6.33.2). It is astonishing that the populace could not recognise that intervention by Athens in the Syracusan dispute with Leontini would inevitably bring about a far more serious conflict. Still, clearly many of the audience simply refused to see that the well-established ethnic tie between the citizens of Leontini and the Athenians could result in a dangerous situation for Syracuse. Taking up Thucydides' earlier comments about the size and capability of the Athenian force, Hermocrates is also made to state that, however formidable this was, providing the rest of the inhabitants of Sicily were to cooperate with one another, the Athenians could be defeated. No invasion force, whether it was Greek or barbarian, was successful when trying to operate far from its home. This must be a reference to the failed attacks on Greece by Darius and Xerxes in 490 and 480 respectively, in addition to the invasion of Sicily by Carthage in 480, the point being that communications and the logistical difficulties of supplying invaders made them vulnerable. And the fame of the Athenians or the fear of them should not deter the Syracusans from defending themselves and, like Athens against the strength of Persia, though viewed as underdogs proving quite capable of obtaining a famous victory. The argument is rather neatly a case of hindsight within hindsight, since Thucydides certainly composed the speech after the defeat of the Athenians in 413. That being the case, he was in the unique position to be able to reflect on the two fates of the belligerents, one an unexpected and unmitigated triumph, the other an uncalled-for disaster.¹⁷

Hermocrates, therefore, advised the Syracusans to send out envoys to make alliances with the Sicels, the cities of Magna Graecia, and even Carthage. The Greeks of southern Italy might not be inclined to fight the Athenians, but they might just withhold aid. The Carthaginians were anxious about a possible Athenian invasion of their territory; and while they might not wish to involve themselves in a war on Sicilian soil, they possessed great financial resources, which might be made available to Syracuse. Hermocrates also suggested that requests be sent to Corinth and Sparta for immediate aid and that the war in Greece be restarted to ease the military pressure in the west. Finally, Hermocrates also proposed that all the cities in Sicily finance a despatch of their available warships for two months and that these should proceed to Taras and the Iapygian Peninsula and await the arrival of the Athenians. Once there was

¹⁷ On Thucydides' use of hindsight in general, see Brock (2013).

contact between the two fleets, it should be made plain to the aggressors that a crossing from Corcyra made them vulnerable to attack, that the Italian coastline was a hostile environment to them, while the Sicilian Greeks had safe harbours at hand in the event that they needed to withdraw from any engagement with their enemy. Such pre-emptive action on the part of Syracuse and its allies should be enough to deter the Athenians from even considering crossing the Ionian Sea. Such a move would be unexpected, since the Athenians up to that time viewed the Sicilian cities with contempt for not having joined their natural allies in the Peloponnese in the war. A bold move would thus be unnerving and unexpected. Hermocrates concluded with the ominous remark, 'these men are coming, and I know well enough that they are already at sea and they are nearly here!'

His dramatic speech did not have the required effect, however; and although the crowd was disturbed, Hermocrates' warning was very quickly countered by Athenagoras, another prominent citizen. Thucydides (6.35.2) describes this individual as a populist leader in the community, who launched a calculating and vitriolic attack on those whom he considered scaremongers. He went further and accused citizens such as Hermocrates of deliberately causing anxiety among the public when none was needed and for personal political gain. He argued that it was highly improbable that the Athenians would campaign a great distance away from Attica while the outcome of the current conflict with Sparta remained unresolved, and especially because Syracuse was easily as formidable an opponent in any military action (Thuc. 6.36.4). But Athenagoras, for all his demagoguery, then adds the rather unusual proviso that, even if the Athenians should arrive in Sicily, the inhabitants would be in a far better shape to win a victory than the Spartans. It is rather odd that, from an apparent reckless speaker, the argument shifts to one of sober practicalities, and includes material suggesting that Athenagoras knew that Hermocrates was actually correct in his assessment. Athenagoras states that he knows that the Athenians have no horses for their cavalry and that should they arrive in Sicily there would be no horses provided for them except for a few from Segesta (Thuc. 6.37.1). In numbers of heavy infantry, they would also be heavily outnumbered, since it was almost impossible to transport a large army by ship over such a long distance. Moreover, the equipment needed for a substantial force was also an insurmountable logistical problem if the enemy hoped to besiege Syracuse. In the speaker's opinion, if the Athenians were able to beach their ships near the city, a possibility doubted by Athenagoras, the invaders would be unable to venture far and would be hemmed in at their tents by the Syracusan cavalry. Thucydides has Athenagoras go on to claim that the Athenians already knew of these difficulties and so would almost certainly not venture close to Sicily, but he writes that individuals in Syracuse were intent on causing panic and exploiting that situation to satisfy their own ambitions and perhaps install an oligarchy or tyranny, both of which were familiar to the citizen body. Athenagoras promised

to act as a self-elected watchdog to observe and reveal those he considered detrimental to the well being of the city; and hence by policing the activities of subversive factions, he would be in a position to safeguard the community. He dismissed the argument that the elite should always rule, but he considered that the wealthy, wise men, and the broader mass of citizens should have a well-defined and satisfying participation in governance (Thuc. 6.39.1–2). Powerful individuals and young hotheads should be excluded from influence as much as possible, while personal ambitions that were transparent could easily be checked. Athenagoras concluded his appeal by claiming that the city had the resources and leadership to counter any threat from Athens, although he persisted in his opinion that such an attack was simply not true.

When Athenagoras had finished, one of the *strategoi* or generals who was presiding over the meeting asserted that the debate should be ended and concluded the proceedings by ruling that reasonable precautions should be made given the number of reports that had been received about the Athenian force's movements. Military supplies were to be readied in case of war, since preparations of this kind were not out of place in any community. Delegates were to be sent to neighbouring cities to observe the current situation. Most of these proposals were already underway. Any new developments would be brought to the attention of the citizen body.

The debate in Syracuse was clearly modelled on the earlier one in Athens, but whereas in the latter the populist or more extreme viewpoint obtained the upper hand, in Syracuse greater caution was evident among those senior and most influential elected magistrates.¹⁸ Athenagoras may have been cast as the Syracusan equivalent of Cleon or Alcibiades, while Hermocrates, if not exactly granted the authority of a Pericles, is made to sound more like the cautious Nicias. Athenagoras is clearly made out to be a more popular figure than Hermocrates; and yet the democracy in Syracuse was much less radical than in Athens, as has been noted earlier. Therefore, a copy-cat construction has been attempted not that successfully by Thucydides perhaps relying on the words of his source, which aimed to show the divergence of political opinion in Syracuse. Philistus in his history would have portrayed Hermocrates sympathetically, since both belonged to the same end of the political spectrum. But his history had yet to be written when Thucydides composed or edited this section. The informant therefore must have been a Syracusan with oligarchic sympathies or even Hermocrates himself.¹⁹ And even the populist Athenagoras is seen to

¹⁸ On the debate, see Kallet (2001) 66–9, who notes the uncertainties contained in both speeches.

¹⁹ Freeman (1892) 3.56 was convinced that the two had met. However, extreme polarity in political debate was a regular feature of historical prose, as speeches prior to the *stasis* in Corcyra or the departure of the Athenian expedition clearly illustrate.

regard himself as superior to the mass of the citizen body, which needed his protection against others more unscrupulous than himself. The mass is cast as an immature body; and indeed some elements in that mass are highlighted as being precisely that in terms of age and so are not eligible for public office. This is not the freethinking mass of Athenian democracy but a more passive body guided and moulded by the elite, some of whom exhibit oligarchic tendencies or aspire to sole rule, while others, exhibiting less extreme views, might also have had aspirations to becoming a tyrant if it might be achieved. Athenagoras castigates his political opponents for causing civil unrest, but his own personal ambitions made him equally untrustworthy. Hermocrates' concrete proposal of launching warships to intercept the Athenians was never in fact followed up, simply because it must have looked as if there were ulterior motives for sending out warships for two months and fighting almost as far away from their city as the Athenians would be when they crossed the Ionian Sea. However, with regard to a Syracusan war fleet, Thucydides betrays some inaccuracy in his own text, for while he must have inserted this passage later and with hindsight, he must also have been aware, as he himself shows, that in 415 the Syracusans lacked a viable fleet, which they only constructed and made operative during the course of 413.

Furthermore, although the communities of the ancient Mediterranean may have been insular and parochial in their attitudes, it is very difficult to believe that the citizens who lived and worked in a busy port whose wealth was largely drawn from the export and import of goods to and from the Peloponnese could not have heard reliable reports of military movements from traders.²⁰ Thucydides states (6.41.2) that the news was reaching Syracuse with increasing regularity; and while later events go some way to proving the indifference or naivety of the citizens there to an Athenian invasion, it nonetheless remains an astonishing episode.²¹ It was only when the Athenian fleet was already in the Straits and beached at Rhegium that credence was at last given to reports of an imminent attack (Thuc. 6.45). This must be dated to the mid-summer of 415; and only then did the Syracusans begin to take serious measures to withstand an enemy presence in their territory. Forts on the border of the Syracusan *chorē* were garrisoned and envoys sent out to seek alliances, while the manufacture of arms and armour became a priority (Thuc. 6.45). The dissension of the previous weeks was forgotten as the citizens voted to elect Hermocrates as one of three supreme commanders to organise the city's defence (Diod. 13.4.1).²²

²⁰ Kallet (2001) 68, reflects on the 'ambiguity concerning Athens' actual power' and discerns that there is an element of illusion in the speeches.

²¹ Perhaps not so remarkable, since even in the last century with much more sophisticated means of communications, complacency and disinterest led to events such as the 'Phony War' in 1939–40.

²² Diodorus gives the names of Sicanus and Heracleides as the other two elected *strategoi*. While it can be assumed that Diodorus employed his source conscientiously,

These were granted the official powers to levy troops and they sent delegations to their neighbours in an attempt to find support against the Athenians. These failed to have any success with Acragas and Naxos, which were committed to Athens, while Messene and Camarina chose not to become embroiled in this war. Selinous and Gela, however, and rather surprisingly Catane, all agreed to send troops to the defence of Syracuse. Perhaps even more remarkable is that, according to Diodorus (13.4.2), the Sicel communities, for the most part, favoured Syracuse but chose to wait to see which side in the conflict obtained the upper hand. Thucydides (6.46–52) and Diodorus (13.4.3–5) present essentially the same information, although the latter has a different order of events for the summer of 415. In Thucydides, the duping of the Athenians by the Segestaeans was revealed, which meant that there was a financial problem for the expedition. There was also some disagreement between the generals about which objective should have priority – first giving aid to Segesta and then returning to Athens, as Nicias proposed; attacking Syracuse immediately, as Lamachus thought; or making solid preparations for a war against Syracuse by winning allies in Sicily, as Alcibiades argued. The third plan was adopted.²³ However, the Messenians rebuffed any attempt to win them over and so an Athenian fleet of 60 triremes sailed down the coast from Rhegium to Naxos, where it was well received. From there the fleet sailed to Catane, where the reception was frosty, and so the Athenians beached at the River Terias (Thuc. 6.50.3) on the northern border of Syracuse. On the next day, states Thucydides, the Athenian fleet sailed south in single file, passing by Megara Hyblaea, Thapsus and the coastal edge of Epipolai to ride the sea off the Island. Ten triremes were ordered to sail into the Great Harbour, probably to entice the Syracusans to launch their ships, but no engagement took place. Instead, the captains of the triremes were instructed to shout out the message that they had come to restore the people of Leontini to

especially since Thucydides provides the same detail, it is worth pausing to ponder the significance of the names, since both have the sort of ethnic association that would just fit rather too comfortably into a passage about Hermocrates. Sicanus clearly represents the Sicani, the community of western Sicily, while Heracleides portrays the Dorian link with Corinth and the Peloponnese. The display of the three names then almost coincidentally takes up Hermocrates' argument for a united island but with strong links to Corinth the metropolis. Thucydides (6.73.1) has the election of the three generals only towards the end of 415, after the Syracusan defeat near Dascon and following the withdrawal of the Athenians to Catane. He also provides full affiliation; this ought to indicate historical individuals, but some doubt about that must surely persist.

²³ Diodorus has no mention of this meeting or any disagreement about strategy. Lamachus' preference was obviously the correct strategy and so it is interesting that Thucydides makes no authorial comment on the error forced on the expedition by the overcautious Nicias and the overambitious Alcibiades; Thucydides' own military record was hardly glorious.

their city and that any citizens of that place living in Syracuse should leave at once for their former homes. Sailing around the Great Harbour, these Athenians were able to reconnoitre in preparation for future military operations. Since the Syracusans made no move to intercept the enemy, the Athenians departed and their whole fleet sailed north to Catane. Hermocrates had earlier claimed that Syracuse possessed sufficient warships for a protracted campaign in southern Italy. Yet it seems very likely that the city possessed only about the same number of triremes it had launched when the Syracusans and Athenians battled in the Straits in 424. The Syracusans therefore wisely stayed behind their fortifications, since their naval capability at this stage was greatly inferior to this Athenian fleet of 60 triremes. Since there was no prospect of an engagement in the Great Harbour, the Athenians sailed north but probably in a good state of mind, having scored points without have to make a fight of it.

At Catane, the Athenian fleet was clearly not welcomed, but its generals were allowed to enter the city to address the citizen assembly. The Athenians clearly had some idea that the supporters of Syracuse here did not have a firm grip on power. So while Alcibiades was delivering a speech, troops who had been stationed outside the walls broke in through a postern gate; when their presence became known, the supporters of Syracuse dispersed in a panic and the assembly then ratified a new alliance with Athens.²⁴ The Athenians plainly wanted to make Catane their forward base, since it was within easy reach of Syracuse. They returned to Rhegium to collect the rest of the expeditionary force and then sailed back to make their camp outside Catane (Thuc. 6.51.3). Once they had arrived, the generals received information from Camarina that the citizens there were veering towards an alliance with Athens, and that at Syracuse warships were being fitted out for launching. The entire Athenian force was ordered out and went south, bypassing Syracuse, where they saw no military activity taking place, while at Camarina the Athenians were refused even a beaching point. The episode (Thuc. 6.52.1–2) appears to have been based on rumour rather than on good military intelligence and almost seems like a ploy to exhaust the enemy's resources. Nevertheless, on the return voyage, the Athenians beached at some point in Syracusan territory intent on gathering supplies and plunder, but the Syracusan cavalry were quickly on the scene and killed a number of the light-armed troops.²⁵

²⁴ The account of Diodorus is so close to that of Thucydides (6.51.1–2) that, although he may not name the Athenian historian, he must have been the source for all later historians.

²⁵ If the cavalry from Syracuse were quickly on the scene then the place where the Athenians landed cannot have been far from the city itself, either along the coast north of Elorus but south of Plemmyrion, or north of Syracuse, possibly in the vicinity of Thapsus. Thapsus was the landing point of the invasion force in the following year and the generals may well have been looking for a suitable place to land their full force for an attack on Syracuse.

On the arrival of the force back in Catane, Alcibiades was confronted with the state trireme *Salaminia*, which had been sent with orders for his arrest and to transport him to Athens to face trial of sacrilege.²⁶ Nicias and Lamachus then shared the command and decided to divide the forces between them and sail along the north coast of Sicily to Segesta. The Athenians were refused access to Himera and so they sailed further along the coast to Hyccara, which they captured. The fleet then either retraced its route to the Straits or continued around the southern coast, while the army marched overland to make contact with some of the Sicels before both ships and infantry reached Catane. Nicias had sailed directly to the harbour of Segesta and demanded payment from this community in exchange for remaining an ally of Athens. Prisoners taken from Hyccara were also sold. The Athenians made a profit from this brief campaign of 150 talents in total (Thuc. 6.62.4), which went some way to rectifying the constant drain on the expedition's finances.²⁷ Nicias then appears to have also marched overland with requests from allied Sicels to send troops, but an attempt to assault a hostile Sikel town named Hybla Geleatis failed. While this strategy of showing the strength of the invasion force clearly had some positive effects for the Athenians in winning over allies or receiving aid by intimidation, it actually had a negative effect on their reputation as one of the most powerful states of mainland Greece. In Syracuse, the citizens who had initially been full of contempt about even the possibility of an attack from Athens were then plunged into great anxiety by the formidable show of naval power when the enemy fleet arrived at the Great Harbour. Still, from that time the regular sightings of Athenian triremes and a single enemy attempt at foraging, which had easily been repulsed, not to mention reports of campaigns in the west and marches through the interior of the island, all made the Athenian presence that much more familiar and therefore that much less alien and threatening. The failure to take the Sikel fortress at Hybla in particular made the Syracusans very much gung ho for a confrontation with this enemy invasion of an island that they were accustomed to dominate. The close proximity of the enemy also gave rise to demands that the Syracusans should march against Catane and bring the fight to the Athenians – and not delay further. Syracusan cavalry that ventured close to the Athenian lines traded insults with their opponents, demanding to

²⁶ Alcibiades was actually allowed to sail in his own trireme with a number of friends. On their arrival at Thurii, Alcibiades and his friends eluded the crew of the *Salaminia* and escaped; and Alcibiades eventually made his way to the Peloponnese.

²⁷ Thucydides states that the Segestaeans paid another 30 talents, which must have crippled this small town. The sale of prisoners brought a further 120 talents, an enormous sum from so small a community (Thuc. 6.62.3: πόλισμα), which indicates either a grave shortage of slaves in Sicily or that this figure has been exaggerated by the historian or perhaps his source.

know whether they had come to stay, occupying lands belonging to others and not returning their allies from Leontini to their own land (Thuc. 6.63.3).²⁸

The increased confidence evident among the Syracusans would inevitably have led to a consequent decrease in the Athenian spirits, and this must have been a cause of concern because it was decided to make a pre-emptive strike. Diodorus (13.6.2–5) recounts that a citizen of Catane trusted by the Syracusans but who had switched allegiance to the Athenians was to report to the generals in Syracuse that a group of Catanacans was ready to take back their city. This, he claimed, could be done at night, since many of the Athenians were billeted in Catane but left their weapons in their camp outside. If the Syracusans sent their armed forces out, they would be able to seize the Athenian camp and destroy the ships that were beached there. The Syracusans believed this informant and ordered their infantry and cavalry to move north to arrive at Catane during the night. Meanwhile, the Athenian army boarded transport ships and, accompanied by the fleet, slipped down the coast during the same night. The two forces must have passed each other somewhere along the coast of the Megarian Plain. Diodorus (13.6.4), following the information also found in Thucydides (6.65.2–3), states that the Athenians sailed at night in silence, reaching the Great Harbour before the Syracusans were alerted, and that they not only landed their entire force but had ample time to begin the construction of a camp. When the Syracusan cavalry came close to Catane, ahead of the main body of the infantry, the Athenian fleet was nowhere in sight and they realised they had been duped. They reported this to the generals, who immediately ordered a turnabout and a rapid retreat to the city. This episode is a little puzzling, since an entire fleet numbering close to 200 ships cannot have progressed overnight from Catane to the Great Harbour in Syracuse without some sort of signalling between them. Also, it is impossible that 50,000 men can have travelled in silence for some 40 kilometres (25 miles). Moreover, the fleet would have had to keep close to the coast and the shallows, meaning that it had to pass close to Megara Hyblaea, which by then should have been garrisoned by the Syracusans. And even if the guards there slept through the passage of 200 ships, there must have been a night watch posted in Syracuse along the walls of Achradina and the Island, along which the Athenians had to pass before entering the Great Harbour. The details here are surely either incorrect or presented in such a way as to draw out the dramatic element of a manoeuvre that may have taken rather longer to organise. Ships might just sail at night with clear skies and a full moon, but a cloudy night with rain might give better cover yet make the sailing that much

²⁸ The order of events in Diodorus (13.4.3–6.3) agrees essentially with that of Thucydides, noting the Athenian arrival at Naxos and Catane, the capture of Hyccara, and the sale of prisoners for 100 talents. He does not mention the first Athenian arrival in the Great Harbour, the Athenians at Camarina, or an overland march from Hyccara to Catane.

more hazardous. However it was done, the Athenians presented themselves to their enemy at very close quarters, occupying the *temenos* of Zeus at Polichne, and prepared to do battle with the Syracusan army.²⁹

The Syracusans did not arrive before the Athenians had fortified the camp and had taken the additional precaution of erecting barriers to reduce the effectiveness of their enemy's cavalry, which was far superior in numbers to their own.³⁰ There is no mention of the Syracusan troops emerging from behind the walls of Achradina and being marshalled into ranks in preparation for battle. It is probable, therefore, that the entire army had raced back from near Catane and over Epipolai, and went directly to the Elorus road leading to the temple of Zeus. This seems implicit in Thucydides' account where he states that the Syracusans immediately formed up for battle, but when the Athenians made no sign to engage them they withdrew across the road and made camp. By the next morning the Athenians appeared to be very keen to get to grips with the enemy. The Athenians drew up for battle with their hoplites eight deep, while the Syracusans in response formed their centre sixteen deep with their cavalry on the right (offensive) wing (Thuc. 6.67.1–2).³¹ But then there was a lengthy hiatus during which Nicias is supposed to have spoken to his troops, although the delay to the battle was perhaps more likely caused because either the usual sacrifices to determine the result were not to the liking of the seers (Thuc. 6.69.2) or the Athenians wasted time purposely to unsettle their opponents. Thucydides relates that a large number of the Syracusan hoplites had wandered away from their places in the ranks and gone into the city, and some had even gone to their homes (Thuc. 6.69.1),³² and these were taken by surprise when the Athenian line began to advance to the sound of trumpets. The sound of imminent action brought the absentees rushing back to join their fellow citizens, although many were unable to find their correct positions and simply took up whatever place was available. This exhibition of very amateurish behaviour by the rank and file, which was probably condoned by their officers, immediately put the Syracusans on the defensive facing an assault from the Athenian phalanx. However,

²⁹ To be fair to Thucydides (6.65.1–2), he does indicate that the Syracusans spent some time gathering their forces and preparing to march; and that this occurred over some days with at least one halt in the territory of Leontini. This would suggest, therefore, that the Athenian fleet and army covered the distance from Catane to Syracuse also in a number of days or nights.

³⁰ The Athenians had perhaps 100 horsemen, whereas the Syracusans had 1,200, and their allies from Gela and Camarina provided another 250, Thuc. 6.67.2–3.

³¹ There is no comment in Thucydides' account on why the Syracusans drew up sixteen deep, although the implication should be that they intended to charge through the weaker Athenian ranks rather than wait for the cavalry to outflank the enemy lines.

³² The Syracusan troops had not been absent from the city for more than two to three days, unless Thucydides has telescoped the events.

Thucydides states that the Syracusans did not lack enthusiasm or bravery, and in these virtues they equalled the Athenians, but they did not possess the experience in battle possessed by their opponents. The skirmishers on both sides were evenly matched (Thuc. 6.69.2) and for some time there was a standstill at the front of both phalanxes. An afternoon downpour accompanied by its usual thunder and lightning unnerved those who were new to the battlefield and contributed to some uncertainty on the Syracusan side. The Argives, who were posted on the Athenian right wing, began to push through their opposite number. The Athenian centre also began to get the upper hand and a rout began among the Syracusan troops, who withdrew in disorder towards the city. The Athenians gave chase, but they could not make their victory effective since the Syracusan cavalry that had not encountered much opposition was free to cover the retreating infantry. The Athenians withdrew in good order to their camp, while the Syracusans regrouped on the far side of the road to Elorus and most withdrew into the city, although some units were sent over to Polichne as a guard for the temple of Zeus.³³ The Syracusan casualties are said to have numbered 260, while the Athenians lost about 50 of their men (Thuc. 6.71.1).³⁴ Funeral rites were performed by each side and then the Athenians decided to return to Catane since their deficiency in cavalry had to be solved either by sending for further reinforcements from Athens or by having additional funds made available to them to buy local horses.³⁵ The feeling of relief must have been palpable among those who stood on the walls around Syracuse as the Athenian armada was launched from the beach at Dascon and, weighing their anchors, the triremes sailed out into the Ionian Sea between the Island and Plemmyrion.

With the departure of the invaders, the citizens of Syracuse again gathered in some despondency at an assembly.³⁶ Thucydides (6.72.2) makes the interesting point of again introducing Hermocrates as the son of Hermon, and as a person of great character, intelligence and ability, who once more stepped forward to address the citizen body. He immediately offered words of comfort and encouragement to his fellow citizens and put the cause of their recent defeat down not to a lack of courage but to confusion in the command process and

³³ Thucydides (6.70.4) suggests that the Syracusans were afraid that the Athenians might plunder the temple and its treasures. This was highly unlikely to happen, since Nicias, who was punctilious in observing religious niceties, was in command.

³⁴ Diodorus, 13.6.5, gives a figure of 400 Syracusan dead, with no mention of Athenian losses.

³⁵ This logistical problem and the possible ways it might be solved, and other difficulties regarding lines of communication and food supplies, illustrate an interesting practical side to the historian's narrative.

³⁶ It is certainly possible that this assembly was during or immediately after a public funeral for those who had recently been killed in the battle at Dascon.

in discipline.³⁷ He recommended that the current practice of electing no less than 15 *strategoi*, who all seem to have had similar rank when it came to the command structure, be abandoned in favour of a board of just three generals.³⁸ These proposals were accepted by the citizen body, who elected Hermocrates, Sicanus and Heracleides (cf. Diod. 13.4.1). At the same time, messengers were sent to Corinth and Sparta requesting substantial aid for the Syracusan war effort, while the Spartans were especially urged to resume their war against the Athenians, and so reduce the chances of reinforcements being sent to Nicias.

While the Syracusans were busy on the diplomatic front in the winter of 415, the Athenians tried to use force to take Messene, since its position on the Straits and its fine harbour would have solved a number of logistical problems: supplies could easily be brought in from both east and west, while strategically the possession of the entire north-eastern seaboard robbed Syracuse of easy communications with Locri, its main Italian ally. However, Alcibiades had warned the Messenians of a possible plot to take the city while he was making his way from Thurii to the Peloponnese earlier in the autumn. The Messenians had therefore taken measures to secure the city, including execution of any suspected Athenian sympathisers. The Athenians beached their fleet at Messene, but when they were unable to make headway against a determined defensive and poor weather after about two weeks they retreated to Naxos, where a camp was constructed (Thuc. 6.74.2).³⁹ For the rest of the winter, both sides in the conflict made hectic diplomatic overtures wherever they thought they might obtain military support or find necessary supplies. The Syracusans were now fully alerted to the extreme danger looming before them and so made improvements to the city's fortifications. A suburb of the city had extended north-west of the agora on the hill up to the plateau of Epipolai, where the earliest theatre was

³⁷ Thucydides admires few of the characters who figure in his narrative, and so the reiterated praise of Hermocrates, cf. 4.58, must be intended to convey some particular message to the audience. Whether his encomiastic description was because the historian and the Syracusan were followers of a similar political ideology or was simply based on personal acquaintance is, of course, impossible to discern.

³⁸ The system of electing numerous generals at Syracuse was perhaps intended to be a more inclusive version of the Athenian system, in which there were 10 *strategoi*, who were elected annually. The 10 Athenian generals each represented one of the Ionian tribal units of Attica. The Syracusan population was divided into three Dorian tribes; an election of 15 generals suggests five from each, but there is no specific evidence for this assumption. Up to the battle of Marathon in 490, the polemarch also had a military role. Most military campaigns undertaken by the Athenians were commanded by two or more generals; and this limited multiple-command structure may have been in Hermocrates' mind when he made his proposal in 415.

³⁹ Thucydides, 6.74.2, specifies a siege of 13 days before the withdrawal to Naxos, which may indicate that he had eyewitness evidence of this particular episode.

situated just below a *temenos* of Apollo.⁴⁰ This whole area was provided with a wall that was linked to the main urban area in Achradina. It was also only at this juncture, claims Thucydides (6.75.2–3), that Megara Hyblaea and the temple precinct at Polichne were garrisoned as a precautionary measure.⁴¹ They also attacked and destroyed much of the enemy's camp at Catane, which had been left empty when the Athenians chose to winter at Naxos.

During the break in hostilities, envoys from both Syracuse and Athens hurried to Camarina, since rumours were circulating that its citizens were about to switch their allegiance from Syracuse to Athens. Their support in the recent hostilities had been viewed by the Syracusans as distinctly lukewarm and there was a long history of antipathy between the two cities, although they had a similar ethnic ancestry. The level of concern at Syracuse can be gauged from the fact that a delegation despatched to maintain Camarinaean loyalty was led by Hermocrates, by then easily one of the city's most prominent figures. Hermocrates clearly stated the obvious when he asserted that, whereas the Athenians said they were in Sicily to lend material aid to their allies in Leontini, in fact they had had nothing to fulfil that claim. He also noted that, while the Athenians for nearly three generations since the defeat of Xerxes in 480 had proclaimed themselves liberators of fellow Greeks, they had in fact enforced their rule on those who had requested their help. It was unlikely, he argued, that in Sicily the ambitions of Athens would be different to what it had been in Ionia, on Euboea, on the Hellespont and on throughout the Aegean Sea (Thuc. 6.76.2–3, 77.1).

The Athenians seem to have shown less enthusiasm for an alliance with Camarina than was perhaps tactically wise, especially since on this occasion neither Nicias nor Lamachus is said to have been present. Athens was instead represented by Euphemus, perhaps another senior commander, but nevertheless not as distinguished as Hermocrates.⁴² He presented the case for an alliance with Athens (Thuc. 6.82.1) and argued that they, as Ionians, although smaller in population than their neighbours the Dorians in the Peloponnese, to whose rule they had previously been subjected, had, as a result of victory over the Persians, made themselves independent.⁴³ As a result of their fleet, the Athenians were able to exercise power over the Ionians and the communities of the Aegean, who had through their own weakness been conquered by the Persians, to whom they

⁴⁰ See Map 3 and Plate.

⁴¹ It seems improbable that the Syracusans had not placed troops in all suitable spots before, especially in light of previous debates about the city's defence, Thuc. 6.41.1; Diod. 13.4. The temple of Zeus at Polichne had been garrisoned since the defeat of the Syracusans at Dascon.

⁴² Euphemus is otherwise unattested, Thuc. 7.75.4, 7.81, 7.88.1.

⁴³ This is a clear indication that the Athenians down to 490 at least had been a member of the Peloponnesian League.

had then been obliged to provide support. Athens therefore deserved its position of primacy on account of its own efforts; and the Athenian delegation came to Camarina to offer safety to friends through protection and the removal of fear from the domination of others (Thuc. 6.83.4). Euphemus also claimed that the citizens of Leontini, if restored to their city, would not be Athenian subjects, but since they occupied a position of great strategic value they would be given sufficient power to be a thorn in the side of Syracuse. Euphemus also bluntly indicated (Thuc. 6.85.1–2) that for a major player such as Athens its friends should be strengthened in order to weaken its enemies, but that the fundamental choice was that between friendship and enmity. Friendship with the Athenians meant that some contribution would be expected: ships such as the Chians provided, tribute from communities such as Methymnae, or the occupation of some geographically strategic site. Euphemus finally made the point that, if Syracuse dominated Camarina, the regime would be harsher because of the proximity of the imperial power, whereas if the Athenians protected them that protection would entail a less harsh policing because they were so far distant from Sicily.

The Camarinaeans are said to have favoured the Athenians, although at the same time they recognised their ambitions. They also had little time for Syracuse, by which they were often dominated. At the end of the debate, they decided to maintain their neutrality, supporting neither party and not doing anything detrimental to either of the protagonists. Camarina was a *polis* of a very modest size and so it was not in a position to give a valuable quantity of military aid to Syracuse or Athens. The Camarinaeans might have allowed the Athenians access to a harbour on the south coast of the island, but they would also have needed constant military support from them for its maintenance. They plainly did not believe that the Athenians would give constant aid over any lengthy period. In the end, of course, the debate's historicity is suspect, for Thucydides' account is perhaps more an indicator of the sort of arguments that were expressed by powerful cities, highlighting the fears that were current in smaller Greek communities of the time.⁴⁴

The remaining winter months were spent by the Athenians in trying to recruit as many of the Sicels to their cause as possible, while the Segestaeans were requested to send as many horses as they could spare for the cavalry. The Athenians also moved their base back from Naxos and rebuilt their camp at Catane in order that an assault on Syracuse would lessen the distance over which their forces needed to be moved by sea. Supplies were also collected for use in what they planned would be a blockade of the city, and messengers were sent to

⁴⁴ The role of Camarina as an ally of Syracuse within a short time must also cast doubt on the accuracy of the account of the meeting, since the city had returned to its natural alliance.

Carthage and the Etruscan cities for aid. Requests for further aid were also sent to Athens; there the *demos* voted to send the necessary funds amounting to 300 talents to obtain supplies and an additional 250 cavalrymen (*hippeis*) with their equipment but not the horses, which were expected to be provided by Sicilian allies (Thuc. 6.93.4, 6.94.4).⁴⁵

The Syracusans, however, maintained their control of the Sicel towns closest to their territory. They also sent out envoys by ship, who called in at the Greek cities of southern Italy requesting their support, and finally sailed to Corinth. The Corinthians responded favourably to the request for aid and also sent their own delegates to accompany the Syracusans to Sparta. The Spartans initially considered sending their own delegation to Sicily and trying to deter the Syracusans from coming to any agreement with the Athenians, but they were reluctant to send material assistance. By chance, Alcibiades had recently arrived in Sparta and he delivered an impassioned speech that was clearly motivated by hurt pride and a desire for revenge. He revealed to his listeners that the Athenian intention was to subject the whole of Sicily to their rule by first defeating Syracuse, and after that the Greeks of Italy and the Carthaginians. Once this had been accomplished in part or in whole, the next step would be to invade the Peloponnese using all the additional manpower and resources available to Athens (Thuc. 6.90.1–3). Alcibiades suggested that the Spartans send one of their own citizens to take command of the defence of Syracuse and that military aid should also be made available. And besides these measures, Alcibiades recommended that the Spartans invade Attica and secure a permanent fort at Decelea, a move that would not only bring the war close to Athens, and open a second front, but that would also severely disrupt the Athenian food supplies. These were usually offloaded from ships on the beach at Oropus and moved overland to the city. Henceforth the grain ships were forced to sail directly into the Piraeus, a longer and a potentially more dangerous route around Cape Sounion. The Spartan leadership, which had already been toying with these ideas, took up the suggestions with a great deal of enthusiasm and appointed the Spartiate Gylippus as the general in charge of Syracuse's war effort. He demanded that the Corinthians provide him with two triremes immediately so that he could leave for Sicily, while others were to be equipped and sent after him.

At the beginning of the spring, probably April 414, the Athenians plundered the land around Megara Hyblaea, but they were unable to dislodge the Syracusan garrison, which held the town (Thuc. 6.94.1–2). Within a matter of weeks after

⁴⁵ The constant shortage of horses that the Athenians faced suggests that they were a luxury item and not readily available. It seems that horses were not easily transported over long distances, although this apparent difficulty had not deterred the Persians in 490 from moving large numbers of cavalry across the Aegean to fight at Marathon. The Athenian expedition would probably have been better served had horses been transported to Sicily.

the Syracusans had heard that the Athenians in all probability were about to begin an assault on the city, they decided that they must also fortify and garrison the plateau of Epipolai. It is remarkable that this is apparently the first time that it had dawned on the citizens of Syracuse that an enemy in possession of the high land to the north and west of Achradina could force the surrender of the city, especially if the invading force also controlled the sea. Quite clearly, the Athenians had a veteran infantry force accompanied by a formidable fleet. If the Athenian land forces were to hold Epipolai and their fleet blockade the harbours, they could invest Syracuse so securely that the city would inevitably be starved into submission.

The Syracusan military commanders decided to hold a review of all hoplites and cavalry on the low-lying area close to the estuary of the Anapus River. The summons to the muster is said to have begun at dawn and the citizens were drawn up in armour for inspection by the three generals, one of whom was Hermocrates. It was decided that a brigade of 600 hoplites, whose commander was a Greek mercenary named Diomilus, was to be stationed on Epipolai so that any unexpected arrival from the north would be spotted and the city alerted. Whether it was due to the glint of armour or the sound of trumpets, the Syracusans suddenly realised that what they feared had actually happened. The Athenian forces were already in possession of Epipolai (Thuc. 6.97.2). How the Athenians were able to sail their entire force from Catane to beaches south of Thapsus, bypassing Megara Hyblaea without being noticed by the garrison there, and move the majority of their hoplites from the coast inland to the western end of Epipolai at Eurialos is a mystery that the sources do not even address. Thucydides (6.97.2–3) and Diodorus (13.7.3) merely state that the Athenians occupied the plateau and constructed the fort named Labdalum at Eurialos. But it seems probable that either the Syracusan night watch must have been overwhelmed by the suddenness of the invasion or that some intrigue took place that kept the arrival of thousands of troops, horses and supplies a secret from the whole population of the city. The Athenians arrived by night and soon after dawn had occupied Epipolai. Diomilus and the 600 hoplites under his command were ordered to deal with the situation. But neither he nor the Syracusan generals knew the size of the Athenian force with which they had to deal; and, moreover, Diomilus had to cover an ascent of more than 5 kilometres (3 miles) before he could reach the enemy (Thuc. 6.97.3). The Athenians had time to dig in and prepare to repel those attempting to attack from the plain below. The Syracusan troops were outnumbered and tactically at a great disadvantage. As a result, Diomilus and half his force were annihilated; the rest retreated in disorder into the city (Thuc. 6.97.4–5; Diod. 13.7.3).⁴⁶ On the next

⁴⁶ Thucydides (6.97.5) states that the Athenians set up a victory trophy or *tropaion*, the first of many erected by each of the warring sides, and that the Syracusans took away their

day, the Athenians advanced down from Epipolai and drew up facing the city walls, but there was no sign of a Syracusan mobilisation and after a while the invaders returned to their position at Eurialos.

Since the Athenians now had unhampered occupation of Epipolai, they immediately advanced their forces closer to the fortifications of the city. They began the process of circumvallation and at the same time they started to build a new camp at Syce that was circular in shape. This new fort was intended to form a central section of their siege works. Labdalum was retained since it commanded the heights over the plain to the north of Epipolai, but the Syce fort became the attackers' headquarters. The Athenians also received cavalry reinforcements from their allies, which increased their strength to 650. The atmosphere in the city must have been one of gloom and doom at the progress being made by the besiegers; and so there appears to have been a spontaneous reaction. The defenders marched out to offer battle to the Athenians, but the generals of Syracuse saw that their troops lacked any real sense of discipline and persuaded them to withdraw into the city again. Some of the cavalry units remained outside and tried to disrupt the Athenians who were engaged in building siege works, but an Athenian unit of hoplites and the Athenian and allied cavalry quickly routed the defenders.⁴⁷

The events of the next few days revolved on the Athenian attempts to ring Syracuse with a stockade and ditch and the defenders' endeavours to throw out a series of cross-walls from their own fortifications to disrupt the process. The besiegers appear to have concentrated at first on an area to the north of Achradina, while the first cross-wall of the Syracusans was thrown up from close to the new walls at the *temenos* of Apollo. The Syracusan generals advised against a further pitched battle and ordered that all effort be made to prevent the city from being encircled, but they added that if the defenders were attacked then some of the local hoplites should be sent out to aid those in the construction work.⁴⁸ Initially it seemed that the Syracusans would be successful in cutting across the direction of the Athenian siege wall to the

dead under a truce as convention allowed. For further discussion of the significance of the victory trophies, see Appendix 5.

⁴⁷ Thucydides specifically mentions an Athenian infantry unit drawn from one of the 10 Attic tribes; such detail probably points to an informant who witnessed the episode.

⁴⁸ From being particularly specific in his narrative, Thucydides now becomes rather vague concerning just where the Athenian construction was aimed. The Syracusan cross-wall from the *temenos* of Apollo can be located fairly precisely, but mention of an Athenian wall to a site named Troigilus, which would allow an encircling wall the shortest distance from the Great Harbour to the sea, is less easily discernible. The encircling wall eventually achieved by the Athenians went from Epipolai down to the estuary of the Anapus in Lysimeleia, but it was never completed on Epipolai north of Achradina. If by Troigilus Thucydides means the open sea down to the Great Harbour then the former may have been somewhat to the

south of the circular fort, but when the defenders took a break, leaving only one troop in attendance, the besiegers suddenly attacked. A picked battalion of about 300 mostly light-armed troops stormed the Syracusan counter-wall, while the rest of the army advanced in two columns towards the city walls. The Syracusans guarding at the construction work scrambled to safety near the *temenos*, but their pursuers charged in through the gate after them before they were repulsed by those inside, with some left behind dead (Thuc. 6.100.2–3).⁴⁹ Not only was the counter-wall destroyed but the building material was taken away by the Athenians for use on their own stockade. The following day, the Athenians began to move their encircling wall south towards Lysimeleia and the Great Harbour. In response, the Syracusans immediately began to construct a second counter-wall out from the city walls at Achradina into the low-lying area adjacent to the Anapus River. The besieging force by then had brought its wall to the steep-sided southern end of Epipolai. Nicias and Lamachus evidently decided on attacking the Syracusans from the heights, while at the same time ordering the fleet to sail into the Great Harbour from its beachhead at Thapsus in order to catch the defenders from the rear.

The Athenians troops descended from Epipolai and the Syracusans prepared to defend their wall. A major engagement took place among the swampy fields of Lysimeleia, with the besiegers ripping planks and boards from the doors of farm houses or barns to bridge the many steep-sided streams in the vicinity. The Syracusans were again trounced, one section of the army retreating into Achradina while the other pushed south towards Polichne. The Athenians were set on pursuing these, but the Syracusan infantry was protected by its cavalry as it fell back. Lamachus was carried away with the success of the fight and dashed into the marsh without sufficient support. There he was isolated and killed by some of the Syracusan cavalry, who carried off his body into the city. The Athenian forces were occupied in this sector outside Achradina, which allowed the defenders to launch an assault on the siege works higher up on Epipolai. According to Thucydides (6.102.2), a length of approximately 300 metres close to the circular fort was destroyed; and the fort would also have been captured if Nicias had not organised a spirited defence.⁵⁰ The arrival of the entire Athenian fleet into the Great Harbour brought the proceedings to an immediate close

north of Achradina yet south of the escarpment leading down to the Megarian Plain. A place named Troigilus has never been identified.

⁴⁹ This was the one occasion when Athenian troops set foot inside Syracuse during the entire siege. Only after the rout of the Athenian forces were about 6,000 prisoners taken into custody in one or more of the stone quarries either in Neapolis or north-east of Achradina, later the suburb of Tyche.

⁵⁰ Thucydides states that the length destroyed was ten *plethra* or 10 × 101 feet. A *plethron* was a sixth of one stade (606 feet). The inclusion of such specific detail again suggests eyewitness evidence.

because the Syracusan commanders recognised the risk of fighting two forces at the same time; and so they withdrew again into the city.

The landing of the fleet on the beach south of Achradina and within a few hundred metres of the city wall brought about an immense change in the course of the siege, the dynamic between the protagonists, and ultimately the conclusion. The Syracusans now abandoned all attempts to prevent a circumvallation and there were clear signs that some members of the citizen body were prepared to reach an accommodation with the besiegers. This new appetite for a truce and peace instead of war was obviously fed by the hectic activity of the Athenians, who continued their siege wall down from Epipolai into the floodplain of the Anapus River and then constructed a second wall. The area enclosed by the two walls, which came down as far as the beach in the Great Harbour, was meant to offer a safe encampment for the huge Athenian invasion force together with a beaching zone for all the triremes.⁵¹ All this was clearly visible from the walls of the city that overlooked Lysimeleia and must have seemed an ominous course of events.⁵² In fact, a hasty end to the siege now appeared to be within sight, since the Athenians began to receive supplies from newly won allies in Italy and in Sicily, while Etruscan mercenaries also arrived to serve with the Athenians. Thucydides (6.103.3) claims that negotiations actually took place with Nicias, now sole commander of the Athenian forces, although these were probably informal since they seem to have given rise to an atmosphere of great uncertainty in the city. The recent military reverses and worsening overall situation in the city were blamed on the three generals. These were relieved of their duties and three new *strategoi* were appointed: Heraclides, Eucles and Tellias. Hermocrates and his colleagues had certainly been taken in by the ruse to draw the Syracusan army to Catane, being caught completely off-guard when the Athenians launched their assault on Epipolai. Since then, the speed with which the Athenians had set up their siege works and the largely inept way in which the defenders had replied to the enemy's efforts meant that no great confidence in the military leadership remained.

Just at that moment, as if choreographed for the stage, Gylippus arrived in Sicily. His journey from the Peloponnese had been eventful (Thuc. 6.104.1–3). He had heard reports of a failing defence at Syracuse and decided to go first to some of the Greek cities of southern Italy in order to confirm their support of Sparta. Taras was an obvious port of call for any Spartan since it had historic ties with the Peloponnese, but from Thurii Gylippus failed to win any support.⁵³

⁵¹ The total number in the force cannot be calculated, but including army, rowers and non-combatants it must have been in excess of 100,000 men.

⁵² As was usual after any battle, the dead were collected by each side for burial. Lamachus' body was returned during a brief truce between the two sides, Thuc. 6.103.1.

⁵³ According to Thucydides, 6.104.2, Gylippus requested the renewal of the citizenship of Thurii, which had belonged to his father Cleandridas. Cleandridas had been exiled from

Afterwards, he was caught in a severe gale, which took his force of four triremes out into the Ionian Sea, and only with considerable difficulty did they return to Taras for repairs. Nicias was aware of the Spartan's presence in the region, but since the forces at Gylippus' disposal appeared insignificant he chose to ignore the information.

After carrying out repairs, Gylippus' flotilla sailed along the coast to Locri, where he was given a more positive view of the situation at Syracuse. It was said that the city was not yet completely invested and that an army marching overland might still be able to break into the city from Epipolai. Gylippus might have chosen to sail directly south to Syracuse, but he knew that he ran the risk of encountering Athenian warships patrolling outside the city, and so instead he decided to make for Himera (Thuc. 7.1.1). In the previous winter, Himeraeans had rejected Athenian overtures for an alliance, but they had no problem in welcoming a Spartan commander and his modest force of 700 men.⁵⁴ To this total was added a further 1,000 infantry from Himera itself, 100 cavalry and some light-armed troops from Selinous, an unspecified number of troops from Gela, and about 1,000 troops from at least one of the Sicel communities whose allegiance had recently swung back to Syracuse. With this small but hardly negligible force of about 3,000, Gylippus first attacked and captured the small Sicel settlement of Ietas close to Segesta. This brief campaign was perhaps simply an exercise or was intended to illustrate to Athens' allies in the west of the island that this Spartan commander was not to be trifled with. At the same time, Gongylus, one of the trierarchs of the Corinthian fleet of 14 warships (Thuc. 6.104.1) that had left Leucas shortly after Gylippus, cruised into the Small Harbour at Syracuse (Thuc. 7.2.1).⁵⁵ Gongylus' arrival coincided with an assembly of the Syracusans that had been convened to discuss whether or not they should surrender their city to Nicias. The sight of a Corinthian vessel that had successfully broken through the Athenian blockade brought new hope to the Syracusans, who never again, at least openly, raised the possibility of a peace with Athens. Within hours of Gongylus putting into port, Gylippus and his

Sparta, Plut. *Per.* 22.2–3, and may have taken part in the re-foundation of Sybaris–Thurii in 445/4. Gylippus' mother is said to have been of helot status, and her son probably had not lived in Thurii himself. As it was, the citizens of Thurii were unimpressed, Thuc. 6.104.3, and it is not recorded whether Gylippus obtained his request. He certainly gained no material support.

⁵⁴ This total approximately accounts for the crews of four triremes; Thucydides notes that the full crew of each ship did not accompany Gylippus. These therefore remained in Himera to guard the ships or even to bring them to Syracuse at a later date (see below).

⁵⁵ Gongylus is said to have sailed last yet he arrived first, in another indication of the great uncertainty of travel by sea. A further 12 warships arrived soon afterwards, Thuc. 7.7.1; Diod. 13.8.2. One may have been lost to patrolling Athenian triremes, Thuc. 7.4.7.

force were sighted on the western edge of Epipolai and the Syracusan generals ordered out the entire army to meet him.

This time it was the Athenians who were evidently taken by surprise. The circumvallation of the city was almost completed (Thuc. 7.2.4), but there was plainly a large enough gap somewhere along the northern walls of Achradina for several thousand infantry and cavalry to advance outside unhindered. This action is surprising and shows that the Athenian siege works were not as advanced as Thucydides or his source either thought or wanted to portray. The Syracusans must have sent out more than 5,000 hoplites and more than 1,000 cavalry, and the Athenians seem to have sat back and watched this manoeuvre take place. It is possible Nicias believed that, if he successfully engaged and defeated Gylippus at this stage, he could actually bring the siege to an end. If so, he seriously misjudged the effect of the mere presence of a Spartan general on a battlefield and how this could inspire his troops. Gylippus and his force crossed Epipolai, to be met by the Syracusans; and together these advanced towards the Athenian circular fort. Gylippus sent a herald to the Athenian line demanding that the invaders leave Sicily within five days. The herald was dismissed without a reply and the message regarded with contempt. Many, no doubt, came to regret that lost opportunity of an easy withdrawal. However, when Gylippus saw that the Syracusan infantry remained highly disorganised in their lines, he ordered their return to the city.⁵⁶ It was fortunate for the defenders that the Athenians unexpectedly chose not to engage. The following morning, Gylippus again led out his forces, keeping the city walls close behind them to prevent individuals from leaving their lines without orders. At the same time, while Athenian attention was drawn to this activity, another force was sent out from the city, leaving by a gate in Syracuse's northern defences, towards the western end of Epipolai where the fort at Labdulum was situated. The fort was stormed and the garrison there massacred. Labdulum had been bypassed by Gylippus on his way to the city, but an Athenian stronghold at the Eurialos end of Epipolai had to be removed if the city was to receive supplies overland. Supplies could no longer easily be brought into the harbours, but if traffic from the interior of the island was resumed this would alleviate the situation inside the city and have a positive effect on the spirits of its inhabitants.⁵⁷ Labdulum was situated out of sight of the main Athenian camp and so ought to have contained a strong garrison since

⁵⁶ Thucydides (7.3.3) claims that the Gylippus entered Syracuse at the *temenos*, but since a gate here lay to the south-east of the Athenian circular fort it seems an unlikely route and perhaps again illustrates the historian's ignorance of the city's topography.

⁵⁷ Thucydides (7.3.5) notes that an Athenian ship was captured by the Syracusans, probably as it lay at anchor in the Great Harbour. This brief note about a very minor episode also points to a certain degree of complacency among the besiegers. Just as Syracusan indiscipline had cost the defenders victory in the field, a lack of focus by the Athenians was to prove detrimental to the success of the expedition.

this fort commanded the approach to the Megarian Plain. Nicias was guilty of negligence in allowing the loss of the fort, for the Athenian supply line now became dependent on the fleet.

Gylippus now ordered a new cross-wall to be built on Epipolai above the circular fort to prevent the Athenian siege works from encompassing the city. The Athenians were preoccupied with completing their own walls down to the beach and so remarkably made no move to interfere with this latest Syracusan action. For Thucydides (7.6.4), the completion of a cross-wall meant that the Athenians could no longer fully invest the city and that they now lacked the power to be able to accomplish the task in the future.⁵⁸ The Athenians certainly no longer considered this approach an option and so allowed the Syracusans almost unhampered access to their hinterland and supplies. The siege seems very quickly to have entered a new and negative phase for the besiegers. At the same time, Nicias decided to plant three forts on Plemmyrion as part of a strategy to exert pressure on the Syracusans by blocking the entrance to the Great Harbour. The strategy was faulty, since the Syracusans also possessed their smaller northern port that was connected to the Great Harbour. Additionally, the Athenians were mounting a naval blockade with their warships already and so the possession of Plemmyrion made the besiegers only marginally stronger in this area. However, the Syracusans now had a strong garrison at Polichne with cavalry; and these especially made foraging difficult for those assigned to duty in the new Athenians forts. The promontory of Plemmyrion is typical limestone country, where there is no surface water, and this desideratum caused major problems for the invasion forces stationed there. The troops not only had to look for fuel but were also obliged to carry water over a considerable distance; and this made them easy prey for the Syracusan cavalry.⁵⁹ Thucydides (7.4.6–7) considered the occupation of Plemmyrion a further tactical error by Nicias, but for the Athenians worse was quickly to follow. Gylippus, encouraged by the successes on Epipolai, wanted to reinforce this new advantage over the besiegers. He ordered the Syracusan army out on a number of occasions until the Athenians took up the challenge for battle. The Syracusan infantry without their supporting cavalry were no match in close combat with the enemy's veteran hoplites and they suffered significant casualties. Gylippus was quick to apologise for his tactical error. He promised the troops a victory, adding that they should bear in mind that, as Dorians, they should easily be able to overcome the Ionian invaders. The troops clearly responded to this act of humility; and when they

⁵⁸ Thucydides cannot have known that the Athenians would not try to complete their siege works along the northern walls of the city, and so his comment must be made from hindsight.

⁵⁹ Thucydides states that one third of the Syracusan cavalry, about 400 men, had been assigned to harass the enemy on Plemmyrion.

were next drawn up to confront the Athenians it was the enemy that suffered a defeat (Thuc. 7.6.3–4). Nicias plainly decided that it was in his own interest and that of the Athenians to avoid further costly losses. He opted for a purely defensive posture, while at the same time he wrote a letter to the authorities in Athens demanding that the expedition be recalled or, failing that, receive substantial reinforcements.⁶⁰

Inside the city, the presence of Gylippus and the recently arrived Corinthian contingent certainly galvanised the Syracusans into new efforts.⁶¹ And, although it is not stated in Thucydides' narrative, there can be no doubt that orders were given for the construction of as many new triremes as the public treasury and private individuals could afford. The war fleet of Syracuse was vastly inferior to that of the invaders in the summers of 415 and 414, and so it is hardly surprising that there is simply no mention of any hostile engagement at sea during the first 20 months of the Athenian presence in Sicily. However, Gylippus, with the active support of Hermocrates, stressed the importance of taking the offensive in order to win naval supremacy. Considering the importance that was to become attached to the relative strength of each side's war fleets, and his preoccupation with logistics immediately prior to this episode, it is curious that Thucydides does not account for the surprisingly large Syracusan fleet that he describes (7.22.1), which is given in total as 80 triremes. If the Syracusans had possessed so formidable a fleet beforehand, why had it yet to take any action? Timidity and fear of the Athenian fleet is hardly credible, since a decade earlier the Syracusans had not hesitated to sail to engage an enemy fleet in the Straits and two years before Hermocrates had advised proactive measures to prevent the Athenians from reaching Sicily, but there had been no mention of a fleet almost equal in size to that of the enemy. Of the 80 ships, 13 could have been those that had arrived in the autumn from Corinth, and four might have been Gylippus' ships, which may have reached Syracuse after him. This still leaves a total of 63 triremes, perhaps 20 or so of which were in service before the Athenians arrived in Sicily, but even so over 50 triremes must either have been newly constructed or had been refitted from vessels not in use and standing idle.⁶²

⁶⁰ Thucydides, 7.11–15. See Evans (2013) 61–2, Hornblower (2010) 560–68 for a discussion of Nicias' letter. The request for further aid was sent in November 414 and the Athenians were quick to respond, sending Eurymedon with 10 ships and 120 talents on about 21 December, together with two new generals Menander and Euthydemus, Thuc. 7.16.1–2. It was also in this letter that Thucydides has Nicias complain about his ill health.

⁶¹ Gylippus seems to have spent the winter months of 414/13 on an extended diplomatic mission, visiting as many communities as he could in Sicily to whip up support for Syracuse, Thuc. 7.7.2.

⁶² The harbours of Syracuse were not as sophisticated as they became under Dionysius, who had 200 boatsheds constructed to allow for drying off of ships and for repairs to be carried out, protected from the weather. In 413, most of the shipping would have been drawn

Gylippus and Hermocrates persuaded the crews, which must have numbered at least 16,000 men, to launch their ships. The plan was to intercept Athenian ships in the Great Harbour and at the same time launch an attack against the forts on Plemmyrion, using Polichne as the Syracusan camp. When the Athenians saw that 35 Syracusan triremes were being pushed out from the beach of the Great Harbour, they immediately replied by launching 60 of their own. The Syracusans launched their remaining warships from the fortified Small Harbour into the open sea directly north of the Island, with the intention of linking with the rest and then making an attack on Plemmyrion. By doing this, they hoped to divert the attention of the troops in the forts on the promontory so that they would be caught by surprise by the land attack from Polichne. The Athenians had no inkling of enemy troop movements in the area around Polichne and simply assumed a seaborne attack on Plemmyrion. The Athenian fleet was divided into two sections. Twenty-five triremes were to engage the Syracusan ships from the Great Harbour, while the rest were to tackle the Syracusans ships sailing around the Island. The Athenians were probably alerted to the second Syracusan fleet by their own triremes stationed at the entrance to the Great Harbour. The battle then became a contest between, on the one hand, an attempt to fuse two fleets into one powerful force and, on the other, a strategy aimed to prevent this from being realised. An intense struggle developed as the Syracusans sought to gather their ships at the entrance to the Great Harbour, while the Athenian ships took up the central position to prevent their enemy from uniting. The fight was so absorbing that most of the troops from the three forts on the promontory went down to the beach to watch and offer verbal support. The entrance to the Great Harbour is 1,500 metres (roughly 1 mile) in breadth and, with 140 triremes, and probably as many smaller boats hemmed into this narrow area, the action was very close. And so the Athenians only recognised that the largest of the forts was in enemy hands after it had already fallen. The troops stationed at Plemmyrion had no chance to organise a defence and so the other two forts were abandoned as the defeated took to small boats or were picked up by one of their own

up on the beach, where it was vulnerable to the elements and attackers. It is possible that the ships in question were not all triremes and that smaller vessels were also in use. Latter discussion in Thucydides' account of the rams and ramming technique employed later by the Syracusans indicates that he considered warships primarily of trireme design. How the Syracusans obtained so many serviceable ships so far away from where they would usually have been built, is impossible to account for. Calabria around Locri was one centre of shipbuilding; another was Catane. Both would have presented the Syracusans with huge problems of transportation and eluding Athenian patrols. It should be noted that the Spartans voted to send additional forces during the same winter, Thuc. 7.19.3–5. A total of 1,600 hoplites were transported by merchant ships and were probably accompanied by some warships. Transport vessels were often elderly triremes and could easily have been adapted for fighting.

warships to return to the camp in Lysimeleia. Finally, the Athenians' experience of battling at sea began to tell against the relative novices fighting them. Some Syracusan warships forced their way into the Great Harbour, only to collide with their own warships already inside. The Syracusans' losses amounted to 11 ships, and the entire crews of seven (nearly 1,500 men) were killed, while about 1,000 from three triremes were captured alive. Athenian losses amounted to just three triremes (Thuc. 7.23.4). The Athenians could justifiably claim a good victory in this first encounter on the sea with the besieged. Yet the price was a heavy one, since the invaders lost control of Plemmyrion and with it vital supplies – especially gear for the ships (Thuc. 7.24.2). Moreover, three triremes that were beached on the promontory were also taken. Thucydides plainly states that this was actually the start of the disaster for Athens, since from then on, with Syracusan warships patrolling outside the Great Harbour, all vessels bringing supplies by sea had to fight their way in and out. Soon afterwards, the Syracusans intercepted and destroyed a convoy with supplies for the Athenians near the Straits, while timber being prepared near Caulonia for new enemy ships was also burned (Thuc. 7.25.1–2). The same fleet on its return to Syracuse was in turn attacked by 20 Athenian triremes. The Syracusans lost one of their warships, but the rest escaped to safety. This episode illustrates that it was still possible for the Athenians to operate outside the Great Harbour and provide protection to any trading vessel that might be bringing supplies to the besiegers, but with no sure system of communication most merchants would now have stayed well clear of the conflict. Still more problematic was the fact that Nicias chose not to attempt to recapture Labdalum and so overland supplies from Athenian allies in the north all but ceased.

The Syracusans then continued to pressurise the Athenians by trying to prevent the enemy from easily beaching their ships. Stakes were fixed in the sand both above and below the waterline; the besiegers spent as much time removing these obstacles, which were easily as dangerous to any ship as a reef, as the defenders took in placing and replacing them (Thuc. 7.25.5–8).⁶³ Further reinforcements arrived to bolster the defence of the city, although they had to fight their way across Sicily and lost significant numbers after they were ambushed by Sicels in the mountains (Thuc. 7.32.2). The extent of support for the Syracusans had evidently strengthened considerably. This is clear from the news that even Camarina, for the first time, despatched a force of over 1,000 consisting of hoplites and skirmishers. Moreover, Gela is said to have been

⁶³ High and low tide hardly varies around the harbour; only the occasional storm causes a swell in the water levels. Fixing stakes in the sandy beach was therefore an obvious tactic as much to demoralise the besiegers as to cause actual damage. See Hornblower (2010) 585, who notes, '[the] level of detail is remarkable and vivid, and characterized by a linguistic inventiveness which itself represents the resourcefulness of the combatants.'

represented by 200 cavalry, 400 light-armed troops and a sufficient number of men to supply the crews of five warships.⁶⁴ Thucydides underlines this change of heart among the Sicilian communities, stating that only Acragas remained neutral and that almost all the rest now lent aid to Syracuse, the only exceptions being the largely Ionian communities of Leontini and Catane. Thucydides gives no reason for this turnabout in the support for Syracuse, but it must to some extent have been dependent on signs of the city's resurgence. The numbers in the Syracusan fleet must have come as a surprise to the city's neighbours, as perhaps was the strength of support from the Peloponnese.

News of a new Athenian expeditionary force will have reached Syracuse long before its arrival in late July or early August of 413. But after the defeat in the Great Harbour, all efforts in the city seem to have concentrated on equipping the Syracusan warships with rams, which would allow them greater flexibility in the constrained space of that location. Smaller and broader rams with a strengthened prow would allow the Syracusans to attack their enemy straight on rather than follow the usual practice that the Athenians employed of the *periplous*, or sailing around the opponent's ship and ramming on the length. But the Athenians had little space to operate this manoeuvre and could only retreat to the beach, whereas the Syracusans also had the open sea behind them.

A three-pronged attack against the Athenians was launched towards the end of July, with infantry and cavalry advancing from both Achradina (led by Gylippus) and Polichne. The fleet was also launched, a factor that seems to have caught the besiegers off their guard (Thuc. 7.37.3). The Athenians launched 75 triremes, while the Syracusan fleet numbered 80, but no general engagement occurred because the day was taken up mostly in skirmishing. The Athenians lost two vessels and the Syracusans withdrew into their harbours. The next day, Nicias fortified the beach and guarded a stretch of the water with merchant ships so that his triremes had a secure place of refuge.⁶⁵ The Syracusans did not venture out, but in many respects their work was already done, since the Athenians were taking more and more defensive measures and were casting themselves as the besieged and no longer the attacker, with all the negative psychology that entailed.⁶⁶ On the following morning, Gylippus ordered the Syracusan army and fleet to attack once again, but little more than skirmishing took place since neither side was able to gain an advantage. In the Great Harbour, one of the Corinthian trierarchs, named Ariston (Thuc. 7.39.2), suggested that the Syracusan fleet should withdraw and that the local merchants should bring

⁶⁴ The contribution of Camarina represented about half its citizenship, while the cavalrymen of Gela were drawn from the political elite.

⁶⁵ For a more detailed view of the Athenian beach defences, see Evans (2009) 146–7.

⁶⁶ The entire siege of Syracuse from April/May 414 to September/October 413 has all the elements of a tragedy in which the Athenian *hubris* was destroyed by the underdog Syracusans.

their market stalls from the agora to the beach so that the crews might eat. The Athenians assumed that this was the end of the day's fighting and also withdrew; and they were then caught off guard again when the Syracusan triremes were seen rowing out once more. The Athenians were quick to launch their own ships, but they did this in some confusion.⁶⁷ Both sides went into action, but the adjustments made to the Syracusan ships' rams proved to be highly effective since the Athenians lost seven triremes and with them most of their crews, while several other warships are said to have been seriously damaged (Thuc. 7.41.4). The Syracusans were exultant at this victory, which seemed to signify the end of the Athenian threat to the city.

Just then, Demosthenes arrived at the entrance to the Great Harbour, rather like the *deus ex machina*, with the additional fleet and land forces voted by the Athenian *demos*.⁶⁸ How information about their movements had escaped the notice of the Syracusans, especially of the garrison at Megara, is left unclear. The arrival of forces nearly as strong as those already outside the city gave new impetus to Nicias' troops. The generals soon conferred; and at the demand of Demosthenes, an immediate large-scale assault was to be made on the city from Epipolai.⁶⁹ First, the surrounding countryside was plundered; the Syracusans made no attempt to prevent this pillaging, partly because they were intimidated by the scale of the reinforcements, but partly also because they realised that nothing worthwhile could be accomplished by engaging the enemy on land when they were almost certainly then at a numerical disadvantage. Demosthenes next ordered that provisions for five days be distributed to the infantry, which he and two of the other *strategoi*, Menander and Eurymedon, would command in a night attack on Eurialos followed by an attack on the city from Epipolai. Nicias remained in command of the camp in Lysimeleia, which probably indicates a strong and, as it turned out, a wholly realistic opposition to the plan.⁷⁰ Thucydides states that this was the only

⁶⁷ Thucydides (7.40.3) does not explain why the Athenians felt obliged to offer battle. Their ships were safe behind their stockade on the beach and the Athenians should rather have taken time and kept their opponents waiting. It is possible that the incident is offered as another example of an increasingly disorganised and undisciplined attitude and of the poor leadership of Nicias.

⁶⁸ Thucydides (7.42.1) has 'just about' 73 triremes and 5,000 hoplites compared to Diodorus' (13.11.2) 80 triremes with the same number of hoplites. It is worth noting the dramatic tension that is constructed in Thucydides' narrative by the way events are probably made to dovetail together and one episode almost seamlessly passes into the next.

⁶⁹ Thucydides (7.42.3) makes it clear that Demosthenes steamrollered the plan and would allow no opposition. Implicit criticism of Nicias meant that he probably maintained a silence in these deliberations.

⁷⁰ The whereabouts of the fourth general, Euthydemus, is not mentioned, although he was later present in the final battle in the Great Harbour, Thuc. 7.64.4. Nicias was continually

night battle in the entire period of the Peloponnesian War. Night battles were fraught with difficulty, mainly because contact between the various sections of an army, difficult enough in daytime, became impossible at night, while the distinction between friend and enemy was so slight that it lent itself to unpredictable scenes in the engagement. The initial attack on Eurialos was successful in overcoming the defence, which is rather surprising since there must have been at least 15,000 infantry on the march from Lysimeleia up to the western edge of Epipolai and clearly audible to a night watch. Thereafter, the Athenians advanced across the plateau rather too early in the night, when the moon did not provide sufficient light. As a result, the attack, almost predictably, descended into chaos, since the defenders in the city knew the land in front of them far better than any of the Athenians; therefore, once alerted, they were able to confuse the attackers, who blundered about and lost contact with one another and with their commanders. In panic, the Athenians must have sighted the lights from their camp and went headlong down the steep-sided southern slope of Epipolai in an attempt to escape; most succeeded in this, although many were also killed in the darkness or during the next morning, when the Syracusan cavalry pursued lost stragglers. Diodorus (13.11.4) also states that Hermocrates played a key role in the defence of the city; thus he provides a Syracusan view of the engagement as a corrective to counter Thucydides, who does not mention the Syracusan in this context. Diodorus (13.11.4) gives a figure of 2,500 Athenian infantry killed in this battle, with a great deal of armour also lost when those fleeing threw their weapons away in order to escape.⁷¹

The result of this battle demonstrated that Demosthenes' authority had been totally undermined while Nicias proved to be the more prudent counsellor, but worse than that for the Athenians was the knowledge that they had now been defeated both on land and on sea. The Syracusans must now have confidently believed that victory over the invaders was within their grasp. The commanding role of Gylippus is again seen at work: he was intent on ensuring that such a result was made as certain as possible. He again went out to inform the other Sicilian Greek cities of recent Syracusan successes and stressed the need for further aid (Thuc. 7.46). Moreover, a sizeable force was sent to Acragas, where the state of *stasis* in the community seemed to invite intervention in the hope of securing another ally.⁷² In the Athenians' camp, conditions were deteriorating almost daily, since it was now the hottest period

unwell and had not ventured far from either the circular fort or the camp in the Great Harbour for over 12 months.

⁷¹ Thucydides (7.45.2) provides no casualty figure, noting merely that more arms were lost than men. See Figure 6.2 for Epipolai.

⁷² The Syracusans sent Sicanus, one of their three generals, with either 12 triremes (Diod. 13.11.5) or 15 (Thuc. 7.46). The size of the force was therefore between 2,500 and



Figure 6.2 Epipolai, the site of the sole night battle of the Peloponnesian War (Thuc. 7.44.1).

of the summer. The swampy coastal plain of the Anapus River estuary, also called Lysimeleia, in which the camp was situated, was malarial; the camp was overcrowded too, and so the death rate from a variety of diseases was beginning to take its toll.⁷³ It was becoming apparent to the Athenian commanders and in particular to Demosthenes that a withdrawal was the best course to take at this juncture. Nicias nonetheless pressed for a continuation of the siege. His reasons were vague, but he intimated that his connections inside the city had informed him that Syracusan resources, especially their financial reserves, were dangerously low (Thuc. 7.48.5, 7.49.1) and that if they were besieged for much longer they would surely be forced to surrender.⁷⁴

3,000 at a time when the Athenians still posed a threat, yet the incident illustrates a real change in the psychology of the warfare and the combatants.

⁷³ Both Thucydides (7.47.2: νοσός) and Diodorus (13.12.1: λοιμός) describe a single plague, but this is more likely to have been a deadly combination of malaria, typhoid, cholera and dysentery.

⁷⁴ Thucydides explicitly states that the Syracusans had already spent 2,000 talents on the war effort and that the city had considerable debts.

Gylippus soon returned with further troops for the city's defence and probably with financial contributions that eased the pressure on the Syracusan public treasury.⁷⁵ The arrival of so many fresh troops from cities such as Selinous, Himera, Gela and Camarina, and from the Sicel communities, merely added to the depressed state of the Athenians, where the demands for a departure, even if only to Thapsus or Catane (Thuc. 7.49.2), became so vocal that Nicias was compelled to agree to an immediate evacuation. On the evening of 8 September 413, at precisely 7.30 p.m., a total lunar eclipse began in the eastern skies over Syracuse.⁷⁶ This common celestial event occurred soon after sunset on what must have been a clear evening, for if there had been clouds it would have been blocked from view. As it was, the inhabitants of the city and, more significantly for the military events that were about to happen, also the Athenians must have observed the passage of the eclipse. The lunar eclipse for the Greeks was one of the least explicable of celestial phenomena and a considerable cause of anxiety. This appeared to be an omen that called for a delay in the departure of the Athenians; and this assumption was confirmed by the seers. Nicias ordered the expedition to remain where it was until the moon reappeared in the same area of the sky, in other words a full lunar cycle.

The Syracusans will have learned of this decision almost immediately it had been taken. There was now an ideal opportunity to force a further engagement on land and in the Great Harbour with the intention of weakening the Athenians still further. The strategy must have been intended to reduce the likelihood of a successful evacuation of the besiegers. Thucydides (7.51.2) makes the point that the Syracusans did not rush headlong into battle but spent several days equipping their warships and practising manoeuvres. When they considered themselves ready for battle, the fleet was launched and at the same time an attack was made on the Athenian compound.⁷⁷ Athenian infantry and cavalry were despatched outside the fortifications and were badly beaten. Thucydides notes that some hoplites were killed and 70 horses lost (Thuc. 7.51.2). The hoplites were less important than the horses, which were a scarce resource and which the Athenians could hardly afford to lose.⁷⁸ The sea battle that took place at the same time was also a disaster for the Athenians: they lost Eurymedon, the second of their generals to be killed in action outside Syracuse. The Athenians also lost at

⁷⁵ Sicanus had obtained an alliance with a sympathetic faction at Acragas, but by the time he had reached Gela on his return this faction had been expelled, Thuc. 7.50.1. Acragas was to remain neutral throughout the war.

⁷⁶ The entire event took six hours, with the moon eclipsed for over an hour.

⁷⁷ Thucydides (7.52.1) gives the Syracusans 76 triremes, Diodorus (13.13.1), 74; and both state that the Athenians launched 86 warships.

⁷⁸ Thucydides seems to be referring to the horses rather than the horsemen (cf. 7.54.4), who may very well have escaped, but without their mounts the cavalrymen were not much use to the army.

least 18 of their triremes and also the crews of these ships, which Diodorus gives as 2,000 men (13.13.8), but the total was closer to double that number.⁷⁹

Syracusan hopes were buoyed up by this latest triumph; and those in position of influence and command, such as Gylippus, must by then have been ambitious for the complete destruction of the Athenian forces. The Athenians and their allies, however, were more anxious than ever to leave, while their opponents decided on a remarkable strategy to prevent this from happening. The decision was taken to block the entrance to the Great Harbour with a boom; this was to consist of about 40 triremes that had come to the end of their working lives bound end to end across the harbour's entrance. This was achieved in just three days (Diod. 13.14.2), since the Athenians made no attempt to disrupt the construction.⁸⁰ The Athenian generals devised the following strategy: they would man as many triremes as they could, fill the triremes with additional troops such as archers, slingers and javelin throwers, make an assault on the Syracusan boom, and break open a sufficient gap for the fleet to sail out to safety, leaving Nicias with a strong garrison to guard the camp until such time as he could be relieved. The plan failed, because although some of the Athenian warships reached the boom, for the most part they were obliged to fight the strong Syracusan presence in the Great Harbour.⁸¹ Both Thucydides (7.70–72) and Diodorus (13.15.5–16.7) present a detailed account of the events and the ideas thought and spoken at the time. Diodorus gives a visual interpretation of the hopes and fears of especially those Syracusans who stood on the walls of the city overlooking the fight below.⁸² Thucydides naturally gives contrasting speeches to the Athenians and Syracusans. Nicias is shown attempting to retrieve some hope for his troops, while Gylippus and other unnamed Syracusan commanders encouraged their forces to fight for greater if not a unique glory. The struggle must have occupied the greater part of a day, but finally it was the Athenians who retreated in confusion pursued by the Syracusan ships. The Athenians lost

⁷⁹ Thucydides (7.53.3) also states that 18 Athenian triremes were destroyed, but he provides no total of casualties. In fact, the total number of Athenian ships lost in this engagement may have been rather higher, Evans (2013) 72. Note also that Diodorus' account clearly originated in a Syracusan source and contains much more detail of this significant victory, Evans (2013) 71.

⁸⁰ For further discussion about the logistics of the operation, see Evans (2013) 72–3.

⁸¹ Diodorus (13.15.3) categorically states that some Athenian triremes broke through the boom, but this is doubtful, at least; none are known to have escaped from Syracusan waters.

⁸² The close proximity of a military engagement and the civilian onlooker cannot be underestimated and is perhaps a phenomenon that is lost on a modern reader or audience. Note the allusion to Troy, where Homer has its inhabitants watch the battles between Trojans and Greeks from the city walls.

half their fleet and the Syracusans about a third of theirs, which tells something of the intensity of the fight.

For the defeated, it was the last straw; several thousand of the rowers had been killed already and the survivors refused to sail again. The Athenians commanders tried to argue for a further attack on the boom, but this was rejected in a spontaneous illustration of solidarity of the lowest-status class of Athenians and their allies. The generals had become impotent and the sole way of escape was now by land. In the city, the Syracusans and their allies were exultant; and now Hermocrates again reappears as the citizen very much in control of the situation. He was aware that the Athenians now planned an escape that same night over land to Catane, while his fellow citizens celebrated their victory in the Great Harbour in a festival dedicated to Heracles. Hermocrates sent messengers to the Athenian camp, assumed to be from friends of Nicias, suggesting that the besiegers should wait until daylight since guards were then stationed along the escape route (Thuc. 7.73.3).⁸³ Such was the impact of the recent night defeat on Epipolai that the Athenian generals, in their anxiety not to be trounced again, unaccountably fell for the ruse. In the end, the delay to their departure took a further three days, by which time all roads leading from Syracuse were heavily guarded by Syracusan troops. The Athenians had insufficient numbers of cavalry to cover their retreat and they were constantly harassed in turn by the enemy cavalry. The Syracusans blocked all chance of a retreat north and forced their enemy into seeking a much more difficult route south. The Athenian rearguard was caught at the Cacyparis River, where it surrendered with 6,000 taken captive, including Demosthenes. Nicias, who was leading the vanguard, nearly made his escape, but the Syracusans caught him a little to the south of Elorus. The catastrophe for the Athenians at the Assinaros River (modern Tellaro) was as much the crowning glory of the entire campaign for the Syracusans as it was the most devastating defeat for their opponents.⁸⁴

The Syracusan tactic of gradually wearing down the enemy both in moral and in effective numbers of those fit and able to fight contrasted with an Athenian command that was hesitant and lacking in dynamism. It is surely also interesting to note that in this conflict both major parties possessed democratic systems of government, but the lack of trust in the military commanders and the punitive methods of dealing with perceived incompetence in Athens contrasted with the Syracusans' far greater trust in commanders both from their own community

⁸³ Diodorus (13.18.3–5) has these messengers disguised as men from Leontini.

⁸⁴ For the last stages of the siege, the attempt to break out from Syracuse, the surrender at the Cacyparis and the debacle at the Assinaros River, see Green (1970) 315–38; Evans (2013) 73–81. Diodorus (13.19.2) states that the Athenians lost 18,000 men at the Assinaros. Just 6,000 were taken as official prisoners of war. Many more were informally made slaves or killed. It is likely that three quarters of the force that attempted to break out of Lysimeleia died.

and from outside. The change in psychological attitudes that occurred in the course of the siege, from the despair of the besieged to confident expectations of triumph, contrasts with the initial *hubris* down to the extreme hopelessness of the besiegers. The Athenian siege of Syracuse was a historical event and it could easily have been re-invented as the subject of a tragedy.⁸⁵

⁸⁵ Although a worthy subject, it does not appear to have been taken up by any tragedian, possibly because the scale of the siege was too large for the stage.

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Chapter 7

The Rise of the Tyrant Dionysius I

It can safely be assumed that Diodorus reused dramatic enactments of the events, especially for the battle in the Great Harbour and the speeches delivered in the aftermath of victory, from Timaeus, whose source was Philistus. It is apparent that the divergence in the two most important sources for Syracusan history in the Peloponnesian War can be accounted for by the origin of the material employed by Thucydides and Diodorus. The former obtained background material from Antiochus, some eyewitness information about the siege itself, and perhaps even consulted with Syracusans such as Hermocrates for details about the Syracusan tactics and Gylippus' role as commander. Diodorus, however, has preserved the highly patriotic account of Philistus (for example at 13.15.5) through possibly an intermediate source, but nonetheless it retains the flavour of this Syracusan view. It is particularly in the aftermath of the victory that Diodorus provides material that is found nowhere else, because either for Thucydides or for the later writer Plutarch it was not relevant to their subjects.

In October 413, an assembly of the citizen body at Syracuse was summoned to decide on what should be done about the enemy prisoners of war.¹ One of the most prominent of the citizens, named Diocles, advocated the death penalty for the Athenian generals and a harsh imprisonment for any of their troops who had been taken. Hermocrates attempted to intervene to mitigate the severity of this proposal, and he is presented in the text as the very model of moderation and common sense. Such a portrayal surely came directly from Philistus' history. Unusually for Hermocrates, who was a respected individual and had certainly gained much credit from his conduct in the siege, he was shouted down by the crowd (cf. Plut. *Nic.* 28.2). An elderly citizen named Nicolaus came forward, guided by two slaves, and began to speak. He was a familiar figure and was known to have lost his two sons in the fighting. He was therefore expected to support Diocles' proposal, so it was remarkable that he instead spoke passionately in favour of leniency. Yet his opinions too were countered strongly by the Spartan general Gylippus, who is said to have harboured a particular hatred

¹ Prisoners were not usually taken in ancient warfare unless they were to be sold as slaves or had some value as hostages. Surprisingly, the Athenians were not sold but imprisoned. Very few returned to Greece, although some, according to Diodorus (13.33.1), were freed on account of their education. Most prisoners had no bargaining power and those at Syracuse were in an especially weak position since it was highly unlikely that Athens would be able to intervene in Sicilian affairs in the foreseeable future.



Figure 7.1 The temple of Apollo in the acropolis of Selinous. This central area was re-occupied by the Carthaginians after they had sacked the city in 409. Hermocrates also used this area as his base in 408.

of the Athenians.² Gylippus' arguments carried the greater weight and shortly afterwards Nicias and Demosthenes and other prisoners were killed according to the proposal of Diocles (Diod. 13.33.1):

² The speeches are lengthy, Diod. 13.20.1–27.6 and 28.1–32.4, and form an obvious construct, but they are probably not the historian's own composition; rather, they are that of his source, judging from the dramatic nature and extent of the embellishment. They are nonetheless of interest for exhibiting the sorts of arguments that might have been familiar to the historian's audience. Gylippus is portrayed as sympathetic towards the Athenians by both Thucydides (7.86.5) and Plutarch (*Nic.* 28.2); and the former (7.85.1) has Nicias surrendering to the Spartan, whom he trusted more than the Syracusans. The hostility portrayed by Diodorus must again derive from his source; and Philistus perhaps may be responsible for this characterisation to set Gylippus against a positive account of Hermocrates' actions in this debate. The execution of the Athenian generals was also considered a move promoted by those in the city who might have been exposed as collaborating with the enemy during the siege.

The generals and the allies were killed on the spot and the Athenians were sent to quarries (λατομίας).³

In one of those ironic reversals of fortune, Diodorus (13.33.2–3) immediately relates the end of Diocles, although it must have occurred some years later. This politician seems to have been entrusted by the citizens to review the laws of the city. Diocles appears to have been a rather severe individual, not unlike the Athenian Draco, whom he either chose to emulate or whom Diodorus' source wished his reader to recall. A law was introduced that made carrying weapons in the agora an offence punishable by death. A report was received that the city was about to be attacked and Diocles rushed off to the agora, where there was much confusion. It was noticed that he had come armed with his sword and some comic shouted out that he was about to break his own law. Diocles drew his sword and committed suicide so that his law should not be compromised. The tale is unhistorical, since not only does it contain obvious anecdotal and theatrical elements but it does not fit into the accepted chronology and with any known event at Syracuse in the next few years. Moreover, this sort of episode, probably from the imagination of Timaeus, was probably designed to lighten the mood of the narrative following so sombre a subject as the fate of the Athenians and their generals in late 413.

Diocles had earlier been cast as having a much more conservative and hard-line outlook than his fellow citizen Hermocrates, although his reforms seem to have been intended to introduce a more radical form of democracy (Diod. 13.34.6).⁴ Paradoxically, Hermocrates, who had played a major role in such a famous victory, was now evidently viewed with suspicion and believed to have ambitions of achieving sole rule. The debate related by Diodorus is supposed to have taken place on the day of Nicias' capture, the day after that of Demosthenes. How can the mood of the citizen body have swung so violently against Hermocrates in so short a time? The answer is that probably at this stage it had not, only taking place in the following weeks once everyone had

³ Plutarch, *Nic.* 28.4, states that Timaeus claimed that Nicias and Demosthenes were warned by Hermocrates and had time to commit suicide, whereas Philistus and Thucydides agreed that they were executed.

⁴ Diodorus claims that magistrates would be appointed by lot and that *nomothetai* or lawgivers would also be elected; if accurate, this certainly points to the adoption of the Athenian constitutional model. Diocles was honoured with a hero's shrine after his death, Diod. 13.35.2, and if Diodorus' information is accurate in describing its destruction during the building of Dionysius' fortifications on Epipolai in about 402/1 then it was situated at some distance from the city. Diodorus also comments on the respect that Diocles commanded among the Sicilian Greek community, including that laws ascribed to him remained in use down to the first century BC. Diodorus also states, 13.35.5, that his comments about Diocles were intended to correct comments by earlier and less positive writers. This is plainly an instance in which the historian offers his personal opinion rather than that of his source.

time to reflect on recent events. In the sort of democracy proposed by Diocles, highly successful individuals who were already extremely influential were almost inevitably to become the object of political attack. Hermocrates may even have seen this reversal coming, having been unable to prevent the citizen body from voting for a more radical form of government. He may have seen the prospect of military service away from Sicily as preferable to remaining in Syracuse. Hence he may have been relieved rather than insulted when he was assigned the command of a fleet of Syracusan warships despatched as aid to the Spartans in return for their recent help in defeating Athens. The size of the fleet, numbering 35 triremes, was impressive and illustrates the gratitude felt by the Syracusans for the aid given to them from the Peloponnese, especially at a time when their financial resources must have been virtually exhausted.⁵ Still, although it was said to be a command of great importance that deserved a general of his calibre (Diod. 13.34.4–5), the appointment of Hermocrates brought his removal from domestic affairs in the city.⁶

If the Syracusans believed that victory over Athens would bring about a general peace in Sicily, they were mistaken, since relations between Segesta and Selinous remained hostile. The Segestaeans had lost their ally and so turned instead to Carthage for aid, while the citizens of Selinous retained their alliance with Syracuse. However, the Selinuntines were defeated by Segesta with Carthaginian support. And this victory was followed in the next year by a more general invasion of Sicily by the Carthaginians, who saw the opportunity to gain greater influence at least in the west of the island. The intricate network of alliances in the region meant that Syracuse became involved when both Selinous and Himera were sacked and destroyed during the summer of 409.⁷ Diocles had been sent with a force of 4,000 to aid Himera, but he arrived after a battle in which the defenders had been defeated. The outcome seemed certain, even with the sudden arrival of a fleet of 25 Syracusan triremes.⁸ There were rumours not only that the Syracusans were sending a much larger force but also that the Carthaginians were about to mount a seaborne assault in response. The fleet

⁵ The trireme crews numbered 7,000 at least, and a fleet of this size cost 30 talents per month to keep at sea, according to Thucydides' figures for the Athenian fleet in 415.

⁶ The career and personality of Hermocrates clearly had an impact both on contemporary and later writers and especially the Athenians. He may have been acquainted with Plato, in whose dialogues, *Critias* and *Timaeus*, he appears; and there was evidently an intention to compose a dialogue named after him. Hermocrates' political inclinations for oligarchy or sole rule must have resonated with Plato's own ideas, and that of the latter's friend Dion. See further discussion in Chapter 8.

⁷ For a detailed discussion of the Carthaginian sieges of Selinous and Himera in 409, see Evans (2013) 92–6. See also Figure 7.1.

⁸ Diodorus (13.61.1) states that these warships formed the major part of the fleet that had been sent to the Peloponnese and that had just returned to Sicily.

was ordered to sail for its home port immediately, with permission to convey any fugitives to safety beyond the territory of Himera. The citizens of Himera, although unhappy with having to abandon their city, had no choice. Diocles withdrew, leading his force overland accompanied by numerous refugees (Diod. 13.61.2–6). The city was sacked the next day.

At roughly the same time, Hermocrates is said to have returned to Sicily, although the date is most likely to have been in the early summer of 408 following the withdrawal of the Carthaginian forces from the island. Diodorus explains that he had been relieved of his command in Greece by political opponents and that he had remained in exile in the Peloponnese. Thucydides (8.85) indicates that Hermocrates had been relieved of his command and replaced, while Xenophon (*Hell.* 1.1.27) confirms that this action was taken because of the recent defeat of the Spartan fleet at Cyzicus.⁹ Pharnabazus, the Persian satrap of Hellespontine Phrygia, who was on friendly terms with Hermocrates when he served with the Spartan naval commanders in the Aegean, had made the Syracusan's exile comfortable by supplying funds that were also then employed to facilitate a return to Sicily. Hermocrates first went to Messene, where he had five triremes built and hired 1,000 mercenaries to crew these ships.¹⁰ He also recruited another thousand men, who were refugees from Himera. With this force, he intended to make his way to Syracuse, but he was probably deterred from making the attempt by the knowledge that his fellow citizens would not welcome his reappearance. He went instead to the ruins of Selinous, where he fortified a section of the acropolis (see Figure 7.2). Once established, he invited former Selinuntines to return, together with any other adventurers who might wish to profit from a war against the Carthaginians. He proceeded to plunder the mainland around the island emporium of Motya and then made an assault on the Punic city of Panormus, where in both instances he was successful in intimidating the inhabitants. Nevertheless, he lacked sufficient resources and numbers of troops to be able to storm either centre and cause real panic in the area. Still, news of his exploits reached Syracuse, where many of the citizens were tempted to allow his recall, although Hermocrates believed that his enemies, such as Diocles, would ensure that such a motion would not be accepted. Instead, Hermocrates began to make plans for an unannounced return to Syracuse, which, through an armed coup, would leave him in control of the city (Diod. 13.63.6).

⁹ The battle gave a surprising victory for the Athenians in 412 against a by now much stronger enemy. Both Thucydides and Xenophon show that Hermocrates was not the sole commander of the Syracusan fleet but that he was the most popular of the three generals.

¹⁰ If Hermocrates had new warships built, as Diodorus seems to believe (13.63.2), then the Syracusan general cannot have been active in the waters around Sicily before the summer of 408. Himera was destroyed towards the end of the campaigning season in 409 and Hannibal the Carthaginian commander returned to his city soon afterwards. Triremes could have been constructed or refitted during the course of the winter of 409/8.

Hermocrates first led his followers from Selinous to Himera, which by then was also a deserted ruin. He learned from informants where the Syracusans had fought against the Carthaginians and then collected and cremated the bodies of these soldiers. Subsequently the bones and ashes were carried by wagon to Syracuse, but Hermocrates was careful not to enter Syracusan territory, choosing to remain outside and waiting to hear of the impact his gesture had on the citizen body and on his political enemies. As expected, although Diocles had not been in any position to carry out the funeral rites of any of his troops who had fallen at Himera, his action was distorted by the political allies of Hermocrates into contempt for his fellow citizens. Naturally there was uproar as the mass of the people was manipulated, so incited by the rhetoric of the occasion as to vote for Diocles' immediate exile.¹¹ Hermocrates may have hoped to be recalled at this juncture, but he was not, because the citizen body remained suspicious of his motives. Diodorus (13.75.6) states that Hermocrates returned to Selinous, but later he was invited to return by his friends in the city in order to seize power. He set out with a force of just 3,000 followers, mostly mercenaries, and advancing overland via Gela arrived near the city. A gate at Achradina had been left open for his entry, and since he had become detached from the main body of his troops he remained in the vicinity. This gave time for the city to be alerted about possible intruders and citizens gathered under arms in the agora. When Hermocrates attempted to move towards the agora, he was killed with many of his supporters. Anyone considered to be in favour of Hermocrates was exiled, while others who had been wounded in this attempted coup were hidden by their families. One of these, says Diodorus (13.75.9), was the future tyrant Dionysius.

How was it that a more robust form of democracy in Syracuse failed to prevent Dionysius from taking absolute power in the city? The sentiment of the citizen body may be gauged from its almost unanimous reaction to the attempt to gain sole rule by Hermocrates, but rather less than three years later Dionysius was made *strategos autocrator* or general with supreme powers. The success of the Syracusans over the Athenians may well have contributed to the notion that those in the forefront of the fight should have more say in government. The replacement of the first council of three generals indicates some dissatisfaction with the progress of the campaign, but once Gylippus arrived in the city and took overall command there appears to have been no further unease about the commanders. It is notable that Diocles spoke in favour of harsh measures against the Athenians and in this he was supported by Gylippus, while Hermocrates,

¹¹ If Diocles, whose fate was sealed by the return of the bones of his former troops, was exiled in 408 before the attempted coup of Hermocrates, then unless he was immediately recalled by his fellow citizens it is almost impossible for his suicide to have been a historical event, since Dionysius was in control of Syracuse from 406 to 405.



Figure 7.2 The acropolis at Selinous. Hermocrates refortified this section of the ruined city in the summer of 408 (Diod. 13.63.3).

whom many suspected, rightly as it turned out, of ambitions of sole rule, argued for a more sympathetic attitude towards the prisoners. Yet it was Diocles who was credited with the move to a more democratic system, at least in the choice of magistrates. The mechanics of the whole system of government remains vague and so it is also possible that Diocles' proposals, which were admittedly mostly concerned with legal measures, were not that empowering to the ordinary citizen of Syracuse. And there were clearly at least two factions evident in the city at this time. Athenagoras had been portrayed by Thucydides as something of a demagogue, countered by Hermocrates who favoured government by oligarchy and even tyranny yet who was at certain times immensely popular, especially among the fleet. Diocles, however, seems to have represented quite conservative interests somewhere between these two extremes yet he desired a more radical democracy.

The political situation was therefore complex and also highly unstable; and the Syracusans, as earlier in the history of their association with democracy, were given no opportunity to put theory into practice. Almost at once, the Carthaginians launched a second invasion of Sicily with a far greater

expeditionary force.¹² Their intention was surely to annex as much of the island as they could; and with successes over Selinous and Himera behind them, they set their sights on Acragas, Gela and Syracuse. Acragas was probably betrayed to the Carthaginians by the mercenaries employed to defend the city (Diod. 13.87.2, 13.88.7) and military sent to the Acragantines from Syracuse proved to be ineffective. A general named Daphnaeus was appointed as commander (Diod. 13.86.4) and with allied contributions the army was an impressive force of 30,000 infantry and 5,000 cavalry, accompanied by a fleet of 30 warships (Diod. 13.86.5).¹³ Although there were initial successes, the lack of support from their allies in Acragas meant that Daphnaeus spent more time covering the evacuation of this city and protecting the refugees who fled to Gela along the coast road. Some of these refugees came to Syracuse, where they accused their own generals of betrayal, but they also complained that the Syracusan army had not been sufficiently well commanded to be effective.

During discussions in an assembly, Dionysius, who had been a supporter of Hermocrates but who had escaped punishment, caused mayhem by joining in the accusation of the Syracusan commanders who had been sent to Acragas. The presiding magistrates, who are named here as archons, attempted to silence this apparently rowdy demagogue by issuing him with a fine, but this was immediately paid by another citizen named Philistus (Diod. 13.91.4).¹⁴ Philistus made it clear that any further fines would also be covered.¹⁵ In the continuing uproar, Dionysius urged his fellow citizens to remove the current generals from their command and to replace them with citizens who might not be from elite families but who had the interests of the ordinary citizen at heart. As a result of his pleas, some of the generals were dismissed, while others, including Dionysius, were appointed.¹⁶ Diodorus is rather vague here (13.92.1), but his account appears to

¹² Diodorus, 13.79.8, has extensive diplomatic intercourse between Syracuse and Carthage under the year 407, with the second invasion beginning in late spring or early summer 406, 13.80.1. For a discussion of the military events at this time and Dionysius' role as general, see Evans (2013) 96–105.

¹³ The size of this army, even with troops from Gela and Camarina and from various Sicel communities, looks questionable, since it is a far greater land force than any available to the Syracusans in their recent war against the Athenians.

¹⁴ Note that Syracusan assemblies appear to have had different presiding magistrates on different occasions. In 415, when Hermocrates and Athenagoras spoke to the citizens, a general (*strategos*) seems to have been the president. For the Syracusan practice of generals and archons, see Robinson (2011) 85–6.

¹⁵ Philistus was probably a little younger than Dionysius, born ca. 430, an exact contemporary of Xenophon. Hence perhaps he was still not eligible to speak in public debates as a citizen, but clearly he possessed the wealth to influence the outcome.

¹⁶ Dionysius' date of birth must therefore belong to the mid- or early 430s. Magistrates in Athens were usually at least 30 years of age; and this rule may well have been followed in

indicate that the Syracusans had abandoned the triumviral form of command, utilised to some good effect in the war with Athens, and returned to their former system of appointing 15 or more generals of equal status, a system that in the past had been discredited.¹⁷ It was conceivably intended that a large number of generals would prevent any one of them obtaining undue influence and that this had been a part of the reforms introduced by Diocles. But Diodorus (13.92.2) claims that Dionysius then set about undermining his colleagues. Whenever possible, he made claims that his fellow generals were in treasonable contact with the enemy; and although some citizens – the better sort, states Diodorus (13.92.3) – realised that Dionysius was aiming for sole rule, as far as the majority of citizens were concerned they had at last found a firm defender of the city. He also went around demanding that all exiles be recalled, since these would be more committed to fighting well as they had more of a stake in the city than other allies or mercenaries. His political opponents could not counter his arguments, because if they tried they seemed to be less interested in defending the city than he was; and so the measure was passed. Returning exiles would easily have been recruited to Dionysius' cause, to make his position stronger.

It was events in Gela that brought Dionysius another opportunity to secure further fame and power. He was sent with a small force to aid the defence of Gela against the Carthaginians. The defence of Gela had been placed in the hands of mercenaries who had not been paid and were therefore on the point of deserting. Meanwhile, in the city, there was considerable unrest among the Geloan elite. Dionysius had some of these arrested; and after they were condemned to death by their fellow citizens, he confiscated their property in order to obtain money to pay the mercenaries and his own Syracusan troops. Geloan messengers to Syracuse were lavish in their praise of Dionysius. In Gela, the citizens urged him to undertake the defence of the city. Dionysius was amenable to the suggestion, but he considered that he needed extra troops. He promised to return quickly with reinforcements (Diod. 13.93.5).¹⁸

Dionysius was clearly an attractive and forceful character and a competent commander who possessed the ability to win the loyalty of discrete sections of the *polis*. Moreover, unlike his fellow generals, he also appeared to gain favourable results. Dionysius' arrival back in Syracuse coincided with a festival in the theatre (see Figure 7.3). He was questioned by the crowd about the military

Syracuse.

¹⁷ The number of generals clearly varied according to the extent of a crisis. The election of three generals might just coincide with the three tribal units into which the citizen body was divided in assemblies, but that would not account for some of the multiples attested, such as the 25 elected in 356, Plut. *Dion*, 38.4; cf. Robinson (2011) 85, who notes the tendency to elect and 'micromanage' a 'great many commanders.'

¹⁸ Dionysius left Gela perhaps in late summer of 406 and did not return for at least six months, in the spring of 405.

situation in Gela and his reply was that he had come to resign from his position as general because he was convinced that his colleagues were about to betray the city to the Carthaginians. The citizens returned to their homes, but in a state of extreme anxiety about their future. On the next day, at an assembly, Dionysius took the offensive again by continuing his criticism of the other generals. Some citizens joined in this debate by urging that Dionysius should be granted supreme powers before the enemy arrived at their walls. They claimed that only a general with such powers, as Gelon had possessed, was likely to be able to overcome the formidable forces at the Carthaginians' disposal. These supporters of Dionysius were probably planted among the crowd; they won the day and he was voted powers to direct the war and defence of Syracuse. Diodorus (13.95.1) states that the citizens took this worst possible decision in the heat of the moment and fearful of the crisis that confronted them. In fairness to Dionysius, the crisis was a real one and the defeat at Acragas had opened the way for the Carthaginians to advance into Syracusan territory. The Carthaginians were detained outside Gela, but for how much longer?

Dionysius' first act as sole general was to issue an order doubling the pay of the mercenaries (Diod. 13.95.1). He argued that these troops would be more loyal if better paid, but at the same time the fact that these same men would be even more loyal to Dionysius was implicit. It seems that the appointment of Dionysius was very soon regretted by many of the citizens who had voted for him to have exceptional powers (Diod. 13.95.2) and that he was aware of this change of heart. In quite a cunning move, he invited all citizens eligible for military service to gather at Leontini for an inspection. Diodorus (13.95.3) claims that this younger element of the citizen body, men up to the age of 40, was more in favour of Dionysius holding the position of sole general than those of more senior years. While still on the march, Dionysius made camp near Leontini, where overnight a commotion occurred at his tent that was said to have been an attempt on his life. He hurried with his closest supporters to occupy the acropolis at Leontini, and on the following morning he addressed the citizen levy in the agora there. In order to counter those plotting against him, Dionysius is said to have demanded and obtained by a vote from among those assembled the right to have a personal bodyguard numbering 600. Diodorus states (13.95.5–6) that this was in imitation of the Athenian tyrant Pisistratus, who had used a similar ruse to obtain his bodyguard. Once Dionysius returned to Syracuse, however, he not only increased this guard to a total of 1,000, but to ensure the loyalty of the mercenaries, not only those in the city but also those in Gela whom he invited to join him in Syracuse, he went about posing as their friend and benefactor.¹⁹

¹⁹ Diodorus is surely telescoping events in this summary (13.96.2–40) and some of the incidents he mentions occurred only after the Syracusan withdrawal from Gela in 405. The Carthaginians had sacked Acragas in the summer of 406 and were preparing to besiege



Figure 7.3 View of the theatre in the Neapolis quarter of Syracuse with the Island and the Great Harbour in the background. The *temenos* of Apollo was adjacent to the theatre on the right and the linear theatre; the oldest theatre in the city was slightly below and also to the right of its more famous successor. The theatre was probably begun under Dionysius I in the first quarter of the fourth century.

While it is easy to view this narrative as simply a negative reflection of Dionysius, the original material, perhaps from Philistus, could easily have been intended to show a more human side of the tyrant and the populist nature of the regime he was in the process of establishing.²⁰

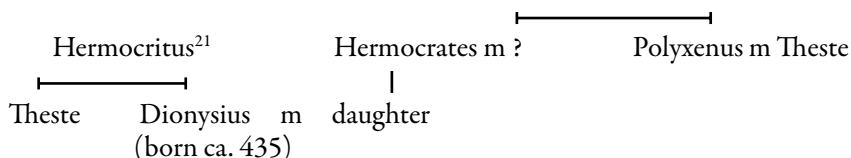
Because he distrusted the Spartan mercenary Dexippus, who had been entrusted with the command at Gela, and believed that this individual could be suborned into restoring powers to the Syracusan *demos*, Dionysius ordered him to leave for the Peloponnese. Diodorus (13.96.1–2) describes the process by which Dionysius quickly gained a grip on power with his military-based support

Gela in the spring of the next year, Diod. 13.96.5. Diodorus seems to have misplaced this information, although he was probably working with the Athenian civic year 406/5 in mind.

²⁰ For Dionysius' populist sentiments and government, see Sanders (1987) 23–4.

and by allowing only the most limited participation by a citizen body placated with promises of internal security and freedom from fear of overseas invaders. It was in this year that Dionysius married a daughter of Hermocrates and he also arranged for the marriage of his sister Theste to Polyxenus, who was a brother of Hermocrates' wife. Such dynastic marriages may be seen as a confirmation of his personal political inclinations and provide some insight into the origin of those allies he needed to maintain his rule.

Dionysius' early dynastic connections



Diodorus states that military commands were assigned only to Dionysius' closest followers, while opponents such as Daphnaeus, who had been the general at Acragas, and another prominent citizen, who is named as a certain Demarchus, were executed.²² In a statement brimming with contempt, Diodorus (13.96.4) declares:

in this way Dionysius became the ruler of the greatest city of the Greeks from having been just a common scribe; and he maintained this power to the very end of his life and ruled for just short of 40 years.²³

Still, Dionysius immediately faced probably the greatest threat to his rule, which was the Carthaginian advance on Gela in the late spring or early summer of 405. The Carthaginian armament is said to have been on a scale never seen before

²¹ See Pearson (1987) 169, for the argument that Dionysius' father was actually Hermocritus rather than Hermocrates based on the fact that one of Dionysius' sons by Doris also possessed this name.

²² The name Demarchus has a distinctly bogus ring about it, since the meaning of this name ('ruler of the people') was closely linked to precisely what Dionysius had set out to destroy. Demarchus may well be a common enough name, but in this particular context it looks as if it had been invented for the occasion. Furthermore, Diocles, who had disappeared from public life, may have died in the turmoil shortly before Dionysius seized power.

²³ Diodorus uses the word γραμματεὺς, which, if taken as its most basic meaning, was probably a servile position such as the Latin *scriba*. However, if this position was more like the *scriba quaestorius* in Rome (cf. the poet Horace's employment after Philippi in 42), it was a much more influential office. Considering his political connections, Dionysius had more likely been an ἐπιστάτης or president of a commission or secretary in an assembly. Diodorus appears to employ the description in a derogatory manner, but it may just be intended to highlight the contrast from relative obscurity to great fame.

in Sicily, and the fate of Gela was surely sealed unless there was a concerted defence by the Greek communities with Syracuse playing a leading role. The Carthaginian forces appear to have plundered the countryside around Gela and even Camarina (Diod. 13.108.2–3), but then they established a camp outside the former in preparation for an expected Greek counterattack. Numerous assaults were also made on the walls of Gela; and although the city was located on a much less defensible area by the sea, the Carthaginians were unable to force an entry. Dionysius called for support from the allies of Syracuse and advanced south with an army said by some (Diod. 13.109.1) to have numbered 50,000. Diodorus also suggests that Timaeus, whom he cites here as his second source, gives a more precise figure of 30,000 infantry and 1,000 cavalry. This is much the same as the numbers that had taken the field in the campaign at Acragas in the previous year.²⁴ And the result of the engagement was also almost identical to the fighting at Acragas. Dionysius elected to pursue an elaborate strategy that involved using the fleet to ferry some of his troops to attack the Carthaginian camp from the beach. Meanwhile, others were sent out from his own camp, which lay to the south-east of Gela, inland to rendezvous with his own column, which was to proceed through the city and attack the enemy by making a sortie from the gates in the walls facing to the west. The troops under Dionysius' personal command were delayed and the whole tactic failed. He was advised that same night to withdraw; and as had happened at Acragas and Himera before that, the civilian population was provided with guards under cover of night. Dionysius went south to Camarina, where he warned the people there to evacuate at once since the Carthaginians were not far behind. The ensuing panic caused massive disruption to the communities in the region as thousands of displaced people fled towards Syracuse (Diod. 13.111.5–6).

Diodorus comments that this disaster filled the Syracusan troops with an anger that they directed not at the enemy but at Dionysius, who was blamed for the retreat and who, the historian claims, was believed to have arranged the whole fiasco so that he would have control over the cities of the whole region (Diod. 13.112.1–2).²⁵ The main result of this disorderly retreat was an attempt

²⁴ The low number of cavalry is puzzling and Diodorus may have misread a source here. In fact, he may have been using a new source such as Theopompus for this period, Pearson (1987) 136. The Syracusan cavalry was an indispensable unit in the city's army. Diodorus also refers to the army being accompanied by 50 'decked ships', which were probably triremes, since it is only later in his rule that Dionysius had larger decked warships, quadriremes or quinqueremes, constructed for him.

²⁵ The accusation is false, of course, and hardly bears scrutiny since it was the Carthaginians and not Dionysius who gained from the crisis. The passage that describes the refugees and the soldiers' anger is a mix of drama and tragedy, probably indicating a composition of Timaeus. Notably, the anger at Dionysius was not as widespread as claimed here by Diodorus.

to remove Dionysius from power by mainly the Syracusan cavalry representing the city's elite. First these tried to ambush Dionysius and his entourage as they came north from Camarina, but when they saw that he still had the loyalty of the mercenary troops they changed their plans and headed directly to the city. They entered the city by way of Achradina, where the guards had yet to hear of the events at Gela (Diod. 13.112.4) and made directly for Dionysius' house, which was situated between the agora and the Great Harbour. Once there, they forced an entry into the building and assaulted Dionysius' wife (Diod. 13.112.4). Diodorus states that Dionysius guessed what was happening, or what was about to happen, and so, taking a picked escort, he covered the distance as quickly as he could in the hope of forestalling his enemies. The leaders of the cavalry imagined that Dionysius would not return to Syracuse but would seek out some other place of asylum. However, Dionysius reached the gates at Achradina in the middle of the night after a journey of 400 stadia (about 80 kilometres or 46 miles) with 100 cavalry and 600 infantry (Diod. 13.113.1).²⁶ The gates were closed and it seems either that there was no night watch or that the guards were hostile towards the arrivals. Therefore, the gates were burned and Dionysius entered with his followers seemingly without opposition. It was only when Dionysius had entered the city that his opponents became aware of the danger, but they were quickly suppressed, with the survivors, perhaps most of the cavalry, making for Aetna, which they occupied. Later, some of the Geloans and Camarinaeans who were unhappy at their treatment by Dionysius went to Leontini. Still the Syracusan army and the main contingent of the mercenaries returned to the city. Shortly afterwards, the Carthaginian commander Himilcar negotiated a peace, since his army had been badly affected by various diseases even during the siege of Acragas; this had hampered his progress after he had taken Gela. Dionysius' power was therefore confirmed for the time being.

However, Dionysius' supremacy was soon to be tested again. The warfare with Carthage had ceased towards the end of 405. In the winter of 405/4, Dionysius began to house his mercenaries on the Island, which eventually became a fortified camp and was to contain up to 10,000 troops together with their families. Dionysius also had work started on a palace complex for his family and closest supporters, which was constructed on the mole linking the Island to Achradina. The Small or Northern Harbour was also fortified with berths for up to 60 triremes (Diod. 14.7.3–5).²⁷ He next turned his attention to securing the

²⁶ This must be an approximation for the distance between Camarina and Syracuse, which by the coast road is over 100 kilometres (about 62 miles). There is no mention of how long it took Dionysius' force to cover this distance, but since it consisted of horsemen and probably light-armed troops, rather than hoplites, it suggests that the march lasted two days rather than a single night, as seems implicit in the text.

²⁷ It is difficult to see how the Small Harbour could be fortified and not be accessible from the Achradina side of the bay, but it may be that the system of fortifications extending

borders of Syracusan territory by launching a campaign against the community of Herbessus. Dionysius evidently called out a levy of citizens to serve in the army along with his mercenaries. Once the Syracusans had been armed and were at Herbessus, some of them reflected on the precipitous action taken by the citizen body in allowing the election of Dionysius as tyrant. The commanders appointed by Dionysius were not able to calm the situation, which very soon turned into an outright mutiny, and the most vocal in their opposition to the tyrant marched north to join forces with the Syracusan cavalry, which was still holding Aetna. Next, they advanced on their city. Diodorus' notice (14.7.5–7) is vague, and this is not helped by the fact that Herbessus has never been located but was probably situated in the Hybla Mountains.²⁸ Diodorus excerpts from his source and does not appear to be familiar with this place or its site, and its significance for him is only that it sparked a serious rebellion against Dionysius. Dionysius immediately abandoned his attack on Herbessus and returned to Syracuse, where he was blockaded on the Island by the rebels who had made a camp on Epipolai (Diod. 14.8.1).

Without easy access to supplies and with some of his mercenaries deserting, Dionysius was faced with a predicament: either to flee into exile or to stand and fight for his position. Among his closest advisers, Heloris is credited with the saying, 'tyranny was a fine shroud', while Polyxenus his brother-in-law urged immediate flight to the Carthaginians, from whom he might be able to enlist the support of a large number of Italian mercenaries who had been garrisoned in the west.²⁹ Philistus, his long-time financier and friend, commented that it was degrading to be seen leaving behind the tyranny at a gallop when Dionysius should rather be dragged by his legs out of power.³⁰ Dionysius is supposed to have concurred with Philistus' view and so he sent envoys to the rebels requesting that he and his party should be allowed to evacuate the Island. At the same time, Dionysius also despatched messengers to the Italian mercenaries, offering any price for their services for as long as the siege continued. The rebels in Syracuse were elated and readily granted Dionysius' request to leave; and an order was given that five triremes should be prepared to transport him and his

from the mole prevented civilian access here. See Map 3.

²⁸ Opinions differ on the site of Herbessus, which may either be Buscemi near ancient Akrai (modern Palazzolo) or Montagna di Marzo near Agrigento (Acragas).

²⁹ Diodorus (14.8.5, 9.1) specifically describes these as Campanians, hence perhaps Hellenised Italians rather than Etruscans or from another Italian tribal group such as the Lucanians, but it may be that the term is simply a generic term for any mercenary from Italy. This particular group seems to have established itself at Entella afterwards, Diod. 14.9.8. See Map 3.

³⁰ Diodorus notes that Philistus wrote about this memorable occasion and it is possible that this section therefore contains some fifth-century sentiments rather than those of Timaeus, third century BC, or Diodorus, first century BC.

followers overseas. The leaders of this rebellion, thinking that they had gained a famous victory, quickly became careless. They allowed the cavalry and much of the infantry to disperse to their homes, believing them no longer required. Meanwhile, the Italian mercenaries were delighted to take up Dionysius' very generous offer of employment. These troops are said to have consisted of 1,200 cavalrymen who made their way via Agyrium, where they deposited their belongings and where the ruler was clearly an ally of Dionysius.³¹ These proceeded to Syracuse, where they killed a number of the rebels when they were in the process of fighting their way into the Island to join Dionysius. At much the same time, Dionysius' military position strengthened with the arrival by sea of a further 300 mercenaries (Diod. 14.9.3). It was quite a different story with the rebels, who began quarrelling among themselves; and lack of unity and consequent absence of purpose played into the hands of Dionysius. The tyrant ordered a sortie from the Island and attacked the rebels near the *temenos*, where he won an easy victory. The engagement seems to have been a small-scale affair since casualties were light; Dionysius, who was on horseback in the thickest of the fighting, was keen that the mercenaries killed as few citizens as possible. He held funeral rites for those who were killed and then sent a delegation to Aetna, where Diodorus claims (14.9.5) that 7,000 of the rebels had taken refuge with the cavalry. These messengers announced a general amnesty and all citizens were urged to return to the city, where there would be no reprisals. Many probably took the opportunity to return to Syracuse, but those diehards among the rebels chose to remain at Aetna; however, these no longer had any influence on events that for the next 50 years were to be directed from Syracuse.

³¹ It is of interest that Diodorus describes these troops as cavalry, when horsemen usually represented the elite of a *polis*. It may be that there was an elite element among these mercenaries, unless they were specialist mounted archers, a common enough feature of Greek armies.

Chapter 8

The Fourth Century Collapse

Dionysius' military exploits and his capacity as warrior and general tend to fill out the ancient narrative and modern accounts of his long rule.¹ However, the domestic and cultural scenes in Syracuse were no less notable, because the tyrant's court became the focus of all activity, whether this was related to the complex politics of the reign, or to military planning and innovation, which was extensive, or to the arts, philosophical studies and scientific inquiry. Syracuse became as much a centre of Hellenic civilisation as an economic and military powerhouse. The patron, financier and often a participator in all these wide-ranging pursuits was the tyrant himself. Thus the fortification of the plateau of Epipolai was certainly a constructional achievement that ranks alongside or even outstrips the long walls of Athens; and the walls of Dionysius made Syracuse an almost impregnable city. His active participation in the building process made him an archetype for modern populist dictators.² The development of the Great Harbour as a place for berthing and repairing up to 400 triremes was a notable factor in establishing the naval power of the Syracusans in the first half of the fourth century.³ The military campaigns in which the tyrant indulged may not always have been successful; nonetheless, they promoted the economic prosperity of the citizen body and this alone explains why the rule of the tyranny extended so tranquilly into a second generation. Later on in the Hellenistic period, it became fashionable to denigrate rulers such as Dionysius and his son, but in fact, without these rulers, cities such as Syracuse and those associated with it such as Locri and Rhegium could not have enjoyed the prosperity that they did.

The negative views of Dionysius did not have their origin in the earliest literary sources that dealt with his rule. Most important for this period, but preserved only indirectly, is Philistus, who provided the Syracusan view of the Athenian siege and the events that culminated in Dionysius' rule. Philistus continued the tradition made possible by Antiochus of recording the history

¹ Diodorus' account extends through Books 14 and 15 but becomes less detailed in the later years of Dionysius' rule, probably because the 370s were momentous times in mainland Greece with the destruction of Spartan power followed by the rise of the Macedonian kingdom. For the military campaigns down to Motya in 397, see Evans (2013) 90–124, and for Dionysius' later military adventures, Evans (2009) 91–7, 111–23. For a concise assessment of Dionysius as tyrant and ruler, see Talbert (1997) 142–9.

² Mao, Castro, Chevez, Mugabe, Gaddafi and many more spring to mind as modern exponents of the sort of dynamic leadership that characterised Dionysius' rule.

³ For the fortifications and the harbours, see Evans (2009) 16–20, 24–6.

of his city (Diod. 13.103.3).⁴ He covered the entire history of Syracuse down to the sack of Acragas in 406 in seven books, then the rule of Dionysius in a further four books, which gives some indication of the detail he must have devoted to the period between 405 and 367. Another two books in equal detail took the history into the early part of the rule of Dionysius II. Philistus therefore became an indispensable guide for any later writer dealing with the years between 405 and about 350. He is said to have been, or said that he was, instrumental in helping Dionysius hold his nerve and preserve his rule in 405. And tyrant and historian must have been close, since it was only nearly two decades later in about 386 that Philistus was dismissed from Syracuse with Dionysius' brother Leptines (Diod. 15.7.3–4). The reason for exiling these two highly influential supporters was that Philistus had apparently married a daughter of Leptines without the tyrant's permission (Plut. *Dion*, 11.6). Diodorus also claims that neither Leptines nor Philistus had indulged in any hostile act but that they were the victims of Dionysius' mental state, since he had developed paranoia about conspiracies. This is not that remarkable, considering that by then Dionysius had ruled alone for so long. Diodorus also claims that both men were soon recalled and reconciled with the tyrant.⁵ The consensus of opinion, however, is that Philistus remained in exile and composed the first of his histories in Thurii, in the Syracusan colony at Adria or somewhere in Epirus, all of which are advanced as possibilities. Yet Philistus' history was not prompted by malice or revenge against Dionysius and the account he wrote must have given a favourable impression of the system the tyrant had created. Had it been otherwise, he would surely not have been recalled. The exile of senior followers possibly betrays some dissatisfaction at the centre of political life, but the tyrant remained unchallenged and ruled for another 20 years. Unlike Hieron I a century before, Dionysius remained safe and secure in Syracuse. He was also actively campaigning into old age. His death in 367, when he was probably close to 70 years of age, occurred shortly after mounting another war against the Carthaginians in the west of the island. The elder Dionysius may not have been a general of the stature of Philip II or Alexander the Great, nor a statesman of the calibre of Pericles or Epaminondas, but it was on account of Dionysius

⁴ See Pearson (1987) 19–30, Sanders (1987) 43–71, for a survey and content of Philistus' histories and their influence on later writers.

⁵ It is interesting to note that Plutarch transmits a different tradition, which has Philistus recalled in 366 only after Dionysius' death as a foil against the influence of Dion, *Dion*, 11.6–7, and that this is the preferred evidence by modern accounts, Pearson (1987) 20–21; Talbert (1997) 148. Sanders (1987) 44–6 strongly argues that Philistus' exile was in Epirus rather than in Adria or Thurii; that it began in 484 and ended only in 466; and that the account in Diodorus should be discarded as confused. However, exile for what appears to be a rather trivial offence might well have brought about a rapid reconciliation and return of both these figures.

that Syracuse and the whole of Sicily enjoyed a sustained period of stability that was an unusual phenomenon in the ancient world.

The negative accounts of Dionysius, father and son, emanate from a slightly later period. Today writers such as Theopompus, who is said to have had an intense antipathy towards any form of sole rule, and Timaeus, who was often more concerned about the drama of the history than the facts themselves, are identified as protagonists in creating this impression.⁶ And so the rule of Dionysius became better remembered for its excess than its success. It was easy to poke fun at Dionysius' attempts to be recognised as a poet and that it was a victory at the Athenian *Lenaea* (Diod. 15.74.1–5) – many thought the result rigged – that brought him so much pleasure that a banquet in which he over-indulged resulted in his death. Dionysius was unique in that he wished not only to promote the arts, a pastime ascribed to the earlier Syracusan tyrants, but also to be a successful poet in his own right.⁷ Dionysius' aspirations, even if they were unfulfilled, showed a departure from the norm in that he was a ruler who wanted to be remembered not just as a warrior or a skilful diplomat.⁸ Naturally enough, when a ruler mingled with literary figures or philosophers, the atmosphere became artificial or fraught, as both Philoxenus and Plato discovered.⁹ Both of these, as intellectuals and knowledgeable about the history of sole rule among the Greeks, seem to have displayed a remarkable carelessness in the company of a tyrant. It may therefore indicate the *hubris* of the intellectual rather than the tyrant and that these believed quite sincerely but naively that they were beyond the control of his authority.¹⁰

⁶ For Theopompus as unfavourable towards Dion, see Westlake (1969) 250. On Theopompus, see also Diodorus, 16.71.3, Pearson (1987) 35. For Theopompus' interest in Dionysius II, see also Sanders (1987) 89.

⁷ Certainly as patron of events in Panhellenic games, as the demarateicon coinage of the Deinomenids illustrates, see Appendix 4. These games were also cultural events, where plays and other forms of poetry held a complementary and even superior place, as at the Delphic and Dionysian games and the *Lenaea*. The Deinomenids undoubtedly patronised poets such as Simonides and Pindar, as noted in Appendix 3.

⁸ On the possibilities that Dionysius composed a history and that other historians wrote on this period including Hermias of Methymna, see Sanders (1987) 41–3.

⁹ Philoxenus was a dithyrambic poet from Cythera but a resident in Syracuse during the earlier years of the tyranny of Dionysius I, probably in the 390s, Sanders (1987) 15–20; Jazdzewska (2013) 324. That he was close to the tyrant is clear from the anecdotal material about Philoxenus and his fate for indulging in witty criticism of the ruler. Philoxenus was imprisoned in the stone quarries, according to Diodorus, 15.6.1–5. See Sanders (1987) 15–20, for a discussion of the relationship between Philoxenus and Dionysius. Dionysius also found Plato's comments offensive, Diod. 15.7.1, and it was later claimed that he ordered that Plato be sold as a slave, Plut. *Dion*, 5.5–7.

¹⁰ While both ancient and modern commentators make Dionysius almost a buffoon in company with intellectuals, it should be noted that in antiquity the Roman emperor

The political and domestic life of the tyrant became as complex as the military situation in Sicily. Dionysius' wife, the daughter of Hermocrates, was the subject of a violent assault in 405 (Diod. 13.112.4), and as a result she died, although it is not stated explicitly that this occurred at that time. The death of the unnamed wife of Dionysius raises some problems, not least since the episode has a certain familiar ring about it. This seems to be the Syracusan equivalent of the rape and suicide of Lucretia, wife of L. Junius Brutus, first consul of the Roman Republic.¹¹ The affair may be a literary construct, but it cannot have emanated from the work of a hostile writer, since the event was surely not meant to reflect negatively on Dionysius. It seems at least plausible to suggest that, in fact, Dionysius' first wife died some time later than 405, and that this apparently childless marriage was the cause of the tyrant's desire to find a new wife. When he did remarry, he did so to two women simultaneously, Doris of Locri and Aristomache of Syracuse. Diodorus (14.44.6–8) records these marriages under the year 398, but, even in a polygamous relationship, Dionysius did not produce heirs to his rule very quickly.¹² When the tyrant died in 367 his eldest son seems to have been less than 30.¹³ Dionysius had two sons by Doris: Dionysius, named after himself, and Hermocritus, named after his grandfather. He also had two sons with Aristomache: Hipparinus, named after the maternal grandfather, and Nisaeus.¹⁴ Dionysius may not have felt impelled to take much care about ensuring a succession; or perhaps there were other children older than Dionysius

Nero sought to emulate the artists of his court and was similarly considered inferior and a clown. But in more modern times eighteenth-century rulers, such as Frederick II of Prussia, Catherine the Great of Russia and Louis XIV of France, also patronised the arts and they too were amateurs at best, some rather good. In Syracuse, it would be more important to emphasise intercourse between ruler and an intellectual elite that was either attracted to the city on account of its wealth and amenities or was invited there.

¹¹ Plutarch, *Dion*, 3.1, claims she committed suicide, but this appears to be too much like the story of Lucretia after she had been assaulted by Sextus Tarquinius, and other rapes and subsequent rebirths of states. On this theme, see Matthes (2000) 40–41.

¹² See Talbert (1997) 147, who dates the marriages to 398 on account of Diod. 14.44.6–8. Considering Dionysius must have been at least 30 when he seized power, the lack of heirs is perhaps worth comparison with Philip II of Macedon, who had seven wives but just two heirs by the time he was murdered after a rule of 20 years.

¹³ Sanders (1987) 77 considers that Dionysius II was born 'after 398.' Cf. Freeman (1894) 241: 'He ... was about twenty-five years old at his accession', which would mean he was born in about 392, just possible if he and his wife were young parents each aged no more than 18. Freeman inadvertently illustrates the difficulty of the chronology of Dionysius' first marriage followed by a long delay before his later polygamous relationship.

¹⁴ Plutarch, *Dion*, 3.3, notes that the elder Hipparinus was a colleague of Dionysius as general in 406, and described by Diodorus, 16.6.1, as a distinguished Syracusan, although he is not mentioned in any context elsewhere and was perhaps dead by the time Dionysius seized power later in the same year.

but who died young. That the younger Dionysius was probably born some considerable time after the double marriages and was an adult only from about 378/7, shows that the actual heirs to the tyranny for nearly 30 years were jointly Leptines and Dion, the brother of Aristomache. The date of birth of the younger Dionysius is closely related to the age of his wife Sophrosyne and the age of his eldest son Apollocrates, who was designated as commander of the Island when his father departed for Locri in 356. Sophrosyne's mother was Aristomache, like Doris married to Dionysius in about 398. Aristomache therefore cannot have been that much older than her brother Dion, born around 408; hence she was perhaps at best 14 years old at her marriage.¹⁵ Even if Sophrosyne was her eldest child, of the four who reached adulthood, she is unlikely to have been born before 395 and therefore was about the same age as her half-brother and husband the younger Dionysius.¹⁶ The generations of this family are therefore very tight indeed if Apollocrates was then born around 376/5 and handed the difficult and unrewarding task of commanding the mercenary troops on the Island aged possibly barely more than 20 in 356.¹⁷

Leptines died in about 483, soon after his recall to Syracuse.¹⁸ The position of Dion in the tyrant's family then becomes of intense interest and is certainly as intriguing as his own later personal ambitions. By 483 Dion was an adult, born about 408, but the tyrant's sons were all young. They would not have survived had the tyrant died unexpectedly, an event that would have propelled Dion into power whether as ruler by right or as guardian for his sister's sons. Dion had become the brother-in-law of Dionysius I but was also to be the brother-in-law to his nephew Dionysius II. The extended family of Dionysius I was made complicated because of his polygamy, and then the marriage of his daughter Arete to her uncle. Dion was about 10 years old when his sister Aristomache married the tyrant, but the connection placed him in a highly prominent place in the dynast's family at that stage, when there was no heir from the next generation

¹⁵ Born perhaps about 412, she was murdered along with her daughter Arete, wife of Dion, on the order of Hicetas in about 353/2, Plut. *Dion*, 58.8–9; Freeman (1891–94) 4.290. Hence she was conceivably about 60 at the time of her death.

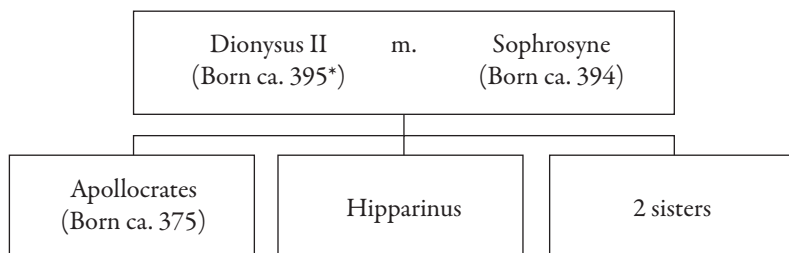
¹⁶ Sophrosyne, her two daughters and perhaps a younger son were murdered by the Locrians in 346 soon after Dionysius had sailed to recapture the Island at Syracuse, Athenaeus, 12.58; Aelian, *HV*. 9.8. On Sophrosyne's date of birth, see also Sanders (1987) 11: 'to the latter part of the 390s.'

¹⁷ It is notable that Dionysius very quickly despatched a seasoned and veteran mercenary commander named Nyspius probably to act as the guiding hand of the inexperienced Apollocrates. Apollocrates is last attested with his father on the Island between 346 and 344. He may have joined his father in exile, but this is unattested.

¹⁸ Leptines was killed in the battle at Cronion, dated under the year 383 by Diodorus, 15.17.1. The third brother Thearides is not mentioned after 388, Diod. 14.109.2, and so probably died before Leptines.

other than himself. Dion was therefore heir presumptive until the birth of Dionysius' son by Doris; and he was probably nearly an adult by the time his nephews Hipparinus and Nisaeus were born. His wife Arete was probably older than her brothers to be given in marriage to her uncle, while Sophrosyne was perhaps the youngest sibling since she became wife of Dionysius II.

The Immediate Family of Dionysius II



*Assuming that he was born sometime between 398 and 392

The complete absence of any information about the activities of the younger Dionysius before he succeeded as tyrant is quite striking. The literary sources are plainly biased and more hostile to the younger Dionysius; and it is easy to imagine that a great deal has been deliberately suppressed in order to construct the picture of the parent as frightening tyrant and the son as little more than an idiot. Plutarch (*Dion*, 9.1–2, 10.1) claims that, as a child, the younger Dionysius had been left uneducated; and instead of having an elite upbringing that would have included experience in military and diplomatic affairs and training in rhetoric, he made wooden toys and pieces of miniature furniture. The elder Dionysius is said to have trusted no one and left his eldest son inexperienced so that he would not be a threat to his own position. The younger Dionysius' attempt to educate himself later in life, at the urging of Dion, was said to have been unsuccessful as a result of this unnatural isolation in childhood. However, this entire passage is highly suspect and must have been either the invention of Plutarch in his desire to enhance the character of his subject Dion or an extraction from the hostile sources. This negative material is not found in Diodorus' account of the succession of Dionysius II (Diod. 15.73.5, 15.74.5).¹⁹

¹⁹ It is true that Diodorus (16.5.1) describes Dionysius II as idle (*ἄπρακτος*) and weaker than or inferior by far (*καταδεέστερος*) to his father, but the translator (Loeb edition) is obviously influenced by Plutarch's *Dion*, which is referenced. On the basis of these two rather bland adjectives, a whole hostile edifice has been constructed based largely on the encomium to Dion written by Plutarch. Dionysius II was a failure since he lost his rule in Syracuse and this may have resulted from a tendency to be lazy. This is hardly high on the scale of assessing tyrants in antiquity.

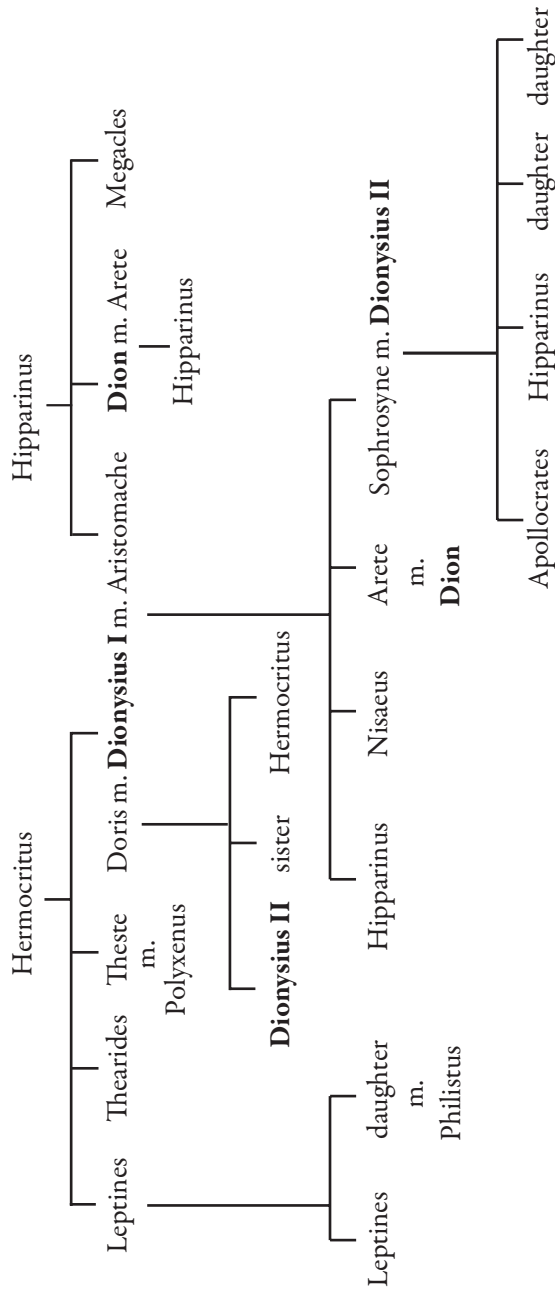
There must also exist here the construction of the insecure tyrant who lived in dread of his son. Dionysius is portrayed on one occasion as being fearful, which was related to a specific illness (Diod. 15.7.3), but Plutarch (*Dion*, 9.3–7) has the tyrant constantly suspicious and spiteful. Yet all the evidence counters this assertion, since Dionysius was neither unsuccessful nor an insecure ruler; the length and achievements of his reign indicate this well enough.

Furthermore, this supposed fear of his eldest son does not seem to have extended to the younger Dionysius' siblings, nor indeed and more significantly Dion, who surely would have posed a far greater threat. If the younger Dionysius had been still a child when the tyrant died, there might have been some credibility to the information about him; but as it is, he was actually in his twenties, by then married with at least one son. In such circumstances, the heir to the tyranny must therefore not only have had the trust of the ruler but also have obtained considerable experience in governing before the elder Dionysius died, since the designated heir took power without any opposition. Plutarch's characterisation is an invention to account for the younger Dionysius' hostility towards Dion and Plato. Indeed, quite exceptionally for a tyrant, Dionysius I had grandchildren and may well have possessed the pious hope that the rule for his family would be maintained over several generations. Tyrants are not particularly remembered for founding enduring dynasties, but Dionysius, if he was slow to have a family, certainly stands out as a ruler who at least thought about the future and posterity, even if in the end neither was kind to him.

Dion's position at the centre of the dynasty has been curiously ignored in modern studies. Once heirs more closely related were born to the elder Dionysius, Dion lost his pre-eminent place and this arguably has much more to do with his subsequent actions than any attachment to philosophical pursuits. That is mostly based on his well-recorded friendship with Plato, which features prominently primarily in the biographical study by Plutarch, where much of the detail was obtained from letters attributed to Plato. These letters are generally considered not to be authentic; and if they contain not the thoughts of Plato but rather those of a later Hellenistic writer, possibly one or more former students, then some doubt is cast on the accuracy of Dion's activities especially concerning the period during which he was an exile from Syracuse, his return as the liberator of the city from the tyranny of Dionysius II, and his own brief rule.²⁰ The other accounts for Dion's career are found in the biography by Nepos and the account in Diodorus (Book 16). Both of these writers provide information that is difficult to reconcile with that provided by Plutarch.

The two biographical studies relate how much in favour with and how close Dion was to the tyrant. Nonetheless, with the exception of a successful diplomatic mission to Carthage recorded by both Nepos (*Dion*, 1.5) and

²⁰ On the seventh letter of Plato, see for example Edelstein (1966) 166–9.



The Families of Dionysius and Dion

Note: Plutarch, *Dion*, 6.1, states that Doris of Locri was the mother of three children, Aristomache of four. Nepos, *Dion*, 1.1, omits all mention of the elder Dionysius' polygamy, possibly out of deference to his Roman audience, who were strictly monogamous. Nepos notes that Dion's son committed suicide soon after his father's return to Syracuse in 353. The name of Dion's son is assumed to be the Hipparinus who appears only in Plato, *Ep.* 7.324. A son of Dionysius II was also named Hipparinus and was perhaps younger than Apollocrates, who was much more active in his father's defence and seems to have been the designated heir to the tyranny.

Plutarch (*Dion*, 6.5) and his presence in a council of the tyrant's advisers (Plut. *Dion*, 5.8), no other details emerge until Dionysius was dying. Might this indicate that the tyrant also viewed Dion with some caution? Nepos mentions only that Dionysius fell ill and that, as his health declined, Dion wanted to know from the doctors whether or not the tyrant would recover. If the illness was terminal, he also wanted to know whether there would be time to consult with Dionysius about the succession. Dion must have been known to prefer the succession for his nephews, Hipparinus and Nisaeus, the sons of Aristomache, while the younger Dionysius was to be excluded. Dion may have put about the idea that he would simply be a guardian, but obviously all power would have been in his hands. It is unlikely, however, that Dion expressed such sentiments to the doctors; probably they learned of his intentions and this information was relayed to Dionysius' son. The younger Dionysius, to forestall any such discussion, instructed the doctors to administer sleeping draughts, from which the tyrant did not again wake. Plutarch has essentially the same details (*Dion*, 6.2–3), in that Dion failed to have an interview with the elder Dionysius in an attempt to influence the succession, but here it was the doctors who took the initiative to prescribe the drugs that led to Dionysius' death in order to win the favour of the new ruler.

The attempt to alter the succession in favour of his nephews may be presented as Dion's concern for the future of Syracuse, but in realistic terms this was a failed attempt at a coup. Dion intended to take power into his own hands and make official a position he had enjoyed for many years, but Dion's star was waning even as the designated heir became a more potent force. The fact that the younger Dionysius already had heirs and that he was certainly not without widespread support among the elite meant that Dion's chances of success were slim. The attempt unsettled those closest to power and intrigues at court rapidly brought action very soon after the transfer of power, an occasion that Diodorus states occurred peacefully without unrest, adding that the elder Dionysius was provided with honourable funeral rites (15.74.5).²¹ Dion was a formidable opponent. He had publicly stated that he could hire and maintain 50 triremes in any campaign for the new tyrant (Plut. *Dion*, 6.5), but the fortune needed to fulfil this promise was also an indication to all that he remained the second most powerful individual in the community.²² Dion was therefore accused of plotting and sent immediately into exile. Nonetheless, the new ruler was kind to his

²¹ Diodorus, 16.6.4, does not refer to an episode to subvert the succession process, but he does have Dionysius II fearing a coup.

²² In total, 60 talents were needed to pay the crews of 60 triremes for a month according to Thucydides (6.8), and this was the offer of Segesta in its appeal for aid from the Athenians in 415. Later it was discovered that 60 talents represented the entire treasury of this community. For Dion to offer to pay for 50 triremes indefinitely illustrates the vast extent of his private fortune.



Figure 8.1 Dion arrived at Heraclea Minoa on his return from exile (Plut. *Dion*, 25.11–14).

uncle/brother-in-law, as he allowed a substantial fortune to leave Syracuse that was intended to provide financial support for Dion, who went first to Corinth, where he was perhaps meant to stay, awaiting a possible recall.²³

Nepos and Diodorus (16.6.5) believed that Dion spent his exile in Corinth, but Plutarch, emphasising the friendship between the Syracusan and Plato, gives an altogether more elaborate account. He places Dion in Athens, in the prestigious upper city rather than with the more radical *demos* of the Piraeus, and then has Dion move out and into the suburbs near to the Academy. There he purchased a country villa, which he later gave as a gift to Plato's nephew and successor Speusippus, perhaps cause enough for later encomia, but there were also excursions to Megara. He also went to Sparta, where he received the citizenship and was something of a celebrity at the Panhellenic Games. Dion's financial position was plainly extremely comfortable until the tyrant decided to withhold further funds, perhaps in response to reports of Dion's plotting; a

²³ Dion perhaps believed that his status would allow him to be rapidly reconciled with the tyrant.

modern audience would find this understandable, but it is presented as jealousy by the tyrant. And so, ironically, the blame is shifted from the subject Dion, who becomes the hero, yet his background was impeccably linked to the tyranny. Dion does not appear to have undergone any sort of epiphany and changed his view on political constitutions, since his connection with Plato reinforced his support for, if not sole rule, then the most limited form of oligarchy if the tyranny at Syracuse was replaced. By and large, his actions illustrate unchanging character traits that were not altered through philosophical guidance; rather, the reverse occurred. While he is credited with an amazing range of good personality traits – open-mindedness, friendliness, a mind able to absorb the highest disciplines, great dignity of spirit (Nepos, *Dion*, 1.2) –, Plutarch (*Dion*, 8.3–4), who defends Dion's unwillingness to join in the obsequious flattery of the tyrant's court, also exposes a contempt for lesser mortals and a stubbornness that Plato is said to have termed 'a partner in desolation.' Dion was therefore clearly not perceived as a philosopher even by his friends,²⁴ and rather astutely they distanced themselves. And whatever political inclinations Dion may have possessed, he was in fact spurred into organising a rebellion from the knowledge that his affluent financial future was in jeopardy.

Whereas none of the sources – Nepos, Diodorus or Plutarch – gives a really credible coverage to Dion's rebellion, they do at least expose his lack of talent as a good general. Under the year 358/7, Diodorus (16.6.1) launches into an abbreviated account of Dion with no recognition of his early life, relationship to Dionysius I or, indeed, any attempt to provide a real chronological context. Therefore, Dion escaped from Sicily in the same year that he returned to the island. Notwithstanding the clumsy errors in the text, Diodorus still provides a much more forthright narrative. He relates that Dion escaped with his brother Megacles and another public figure named Heraclides to Corinth, where they immediately set about organising their return to Syracuse, and he enlisted mercenaries and bought armour. A year in exile must have passed before he hired two merchant ships, hired 800 mercenaries from the Peloponnese and set sail from Zacynthus (16.6.5).

Plutarch states (*Dion*, 23.3) that it was mid-summer and that the etesian winds were still blowing, but these would not have affected a westward sailing from the Peloponnese. Before the expedition started a lunar eclipse occurred, which adds some interesting points regarding the date because of the synchronisation of these two natural events. The etesian winds blow from the north through the Aegean Sea, affecting the eastern Mediterranean from about mid-May through to mid-September, and could blow sufficiently strongly to

²⁴ Among the great figures of the period, only Epaminondas was unique in combining philosophy with great talent in military affairs.

make sailing from south to north almost impossible.²⁵ But Plutarch then notes the celestial phenomenon of the lunar eclipse and this can be securely dated to the nights of 19 September in 357 or 9 August 356. Diodorus (16.9.4) gives the date of Dion's sailing under the year 357/6, but which year was it? If Diodorus was using Ephorus, or indeed Timaeus, as his source here then his understanding of the calendar year would be that of the Athenian civic year, which began in July/August with the month Hekatombaion, followed by Metageitnion (August/September) and Boedromion (September/October). By mid-summer, did Plutarch mean that this was Metageitnion, which probably did not contain the eclipses of 357 or 356 yet is within the season of the adverse winds, or could this be an indication that Dion's departure coincided with the first Athenian calendar month Hekatombaion, which would mean that the expedition began in 356, not 357? The etesian winds would probably have abated by the second half of September in 357, and 19 September can hardly be described as the middle of the summer but rather just at the equinox and the beginning of autumn. Therefore the lunar eclipse of 9 August 356, when the winds would still be much in evidence, indicates that in all probability Dion began his expedition in this particular year. Dion's ships were thrown off course by a gale when they attempted to sail directly across the Ionian Sea from Zacynthus to Sicily and were driven to the coast of North Africa near the island of Cercina in the (modern) Gulf of Gabes. This cyclone, which seems to have originated in the southern Adriatic, may well have seemed connected with the etesian winds that blow south through the Aegean, although these events were almost certainly meteorologically discrete. There seems to have been little damage to the ships; and the detour did not cause a lengthy delay because southerly winds quickly replaced the northerly gale, enabling a rapid sailing north to Sicily.

Dion landed with his small force at Heraclea Minoa (see Figures 8.1 and 8.2), where the Punic garrison commander Paralus, who was a guest friend of Dion, provided the expedition with supplies. Plutarch has a highly dramatic version of events that can have little or no basis in fact, designed perhaps to accentuate Dion's abilities as a commander.²⁶ He states that the Carthaginians were ignorant of just who the Greeks were, and tried to prevent them from beaching their ships. The Greeks, having spent at least three weeks on the sea, were understandably eager to be on terra firma and stormed the beach, scattering their opponents but refraining from killing any under orders from Dion, and chasing the Carthaginians into their town, which they at once captured. Only then did Dion identify himself and return the town to its Punic commander,

²⁵ Evans (2013) 163, 189–90.

²⁶ Plutarch names the Carthaginian governor of Heraclea Minoa as Synalus, *Dion*, 25.5.



Figure 8.2 View from Heraclea Minoa. 'Making good time, within five days they reached Minoa, a small place in that part of Sicily under the control of the Carthaginians' (Plut. *Dion*, 25.11).

who subsequently entertained the visitors and sent them on their way with supplies.²⁷ This episode looks highly suspect simply because of the geographical location of Heraclea, which occupies a site high above the beach and has an entry only on the landward side. It would have been impossible for a small fleet to land unnoticed and for the heavy infantry to charge uphill over a considerable distance and then to occupy the town. If Dion came to Heraclea at all, it is more likely that he was aware that he would be received cordially and intended to make this his initial base. From there, it is claimed that Dion led his army of 1,000 mercenaries overland to Syracuse, collecting reinforcements as he went so that by the time he entered Syracusan territory he possessed an army of 20,000, 5,000 of whom he armed with the supplies brought from the Peloponnese. Dionysius was absent from the city visiting garrisons in the southern Adriatic (Diod. 16.10.2, 11.3; cf. Plut. 26.1; Nepos, *Dion*, 5.4, in southern Italy) and

²⁷ Nepos has no mention of Dion's landing at Heraclea Minoa and this probably indicates that the episode was either fabricated or highly embellished.

one of his chief lieutenants, Timocrates, married to Dion's former wife Arete, panicked and fled while others retreated behind the fortifications of the Island. The tyrant arrived in Syracuse seven days after Dion and his supporters had occupied the greater part of the city and were constructing a defensive perimeter wall of their own against the existing fortifications at the mole to the Island.²⁸ Nonetheless, a sudden sortie by Dionysius' troops caught the rebels off guard, but the presence of Dion, who rushed to the aid of his hard-pressed supporters, even when he was wounded, won the day: the tyrant's mercenaries were driven back, with the loss of 800 of the number, inside the Pentapylon, the gates that opened onto the mole connecting Achradina to the Island.²⁹ Dionysius, who had already tried to postpone negotiations and prevaricate in any dealing with his relative to his own advantage, now offered terms but the response to these were in turn delayed by Dion until his siege walls in Achradina were completed. Dionysius was ordered to give up his rule and hope for some lenient treatment from the Syracusans. Diodorus (16.13.2) regarded this as a further diplomatic success by Dion following his recent military victory. Meanwhile, Dionysius rejected Dion's proposal out of hand, and although he had more than sufficient forces to hold the mole and Island, these were dangerously short of food supplies.

Diodorus takes up the account in the next year (355), by which time Philistus, the senior commander of Dionysius, had not only sailed to and back from Rhegium with cavalry reinforcements (Diod. 16.16.1) but had also led a diversionary attack on Leontini. The citizens of this town, in common with most of the communities in Sicily, had switched their allegiance from Dionysius to Dion and the former clearly hoped to win Leontini back with an assault so as to open up a second front against his enemy. Philistus succeeded in gaining an entrance during a night assault and occupied a section of the town, but when the citizens received aid from Syracuse he was forced to retreat. Diodorus also claims (16.16.2) that it was only at this juncture, over a year and perhaps nearly two since Dion had arrived in Sicily, that one of his fellow rebels, Heraclides, finally arrived in the city with 20 warships and 1,500 troops, presumably mostly mercenaries.³⁰ On account of his expertise he was immediately elected to lead the fleet, which seems to have been a deliberate move to reduce the power and influence of Dion. Philistus had, in the meantime, collected a fleet of 60 triremes and these engaged the rebels at sea but were defeated. Philistus either committed suicide rather than be taken prisoner (Diod. 16.16.3) or was executed later (Plut.

²⁸ Dion and his brother Megacles had been acclaimed generals with supreme power. The irony of the fact that these were so closely related to the tyrant they wished to depose seems to have been lost on the majority of Syracusan citizens at this stage.

²⁹ For the Pentapylon (Gates) see Evans (2009) 25–7. See also Map 3.

³⁰ Plutarch, *Dion*, 32.3, claims that Heraclides and Dion had quarrelled while in exile and that the former was therefore on an expedition of his own. Certainly from the time of his arrival until his murder, Heraclides was clearly perceived as a rival to Dion.

Dion, 35.3–6). Dionysius now seems to have given up hope of success against Dion, offering to hand over the Island and leave the city altogether. However, the general body of Syracusan citizens, for some inexplicable reason, and here Diodorus blames their attitude on being influenced by inept demagogues, voted to continue to besiege the Island in order to force an unconditional surrender. Nevertheless, Dionysius sailed away for Locri, leaving a strong garrison behind under the command of his son Apollocrates (Plut. *Dion*, 37.4). Meanwhile, the Syracusans squabbled about whether to support Heraclides or Dion as supreme leader of the community. The mercenary troops employed by Dion and Heraclides were still waiting for the payments that had been promised to them, but the recent bout of civil unrest had virtually drained the public treasury. When it became obvious that there were no funds to pay them, the mercenaries, who were mainly from the Peloponnese, responded by taking matters into their own hands, and withdrew their services.³¹ They asked Dion to lead them; and in a show of exasperation at the lack of loyalty shown him or in pique at not being chosen as the chief military commander, he led the mercenaries away from Syracuse to Leontini. Once on the march, they were attacked by the Syracusans, who were to put to flight, and Dion took up residence in Leontini.

Dionysius was probably kept well informed about the lack of solidarity among the Syracusans; and he sent a mercenary from Neapolis named Nysius, who had the reputation of being a sound general, to take command of the garrison on the Island. Just as Dionysius' mercenaries were about to negotiate their capitulation because of a lack of supplies, Nysius arrived in the Great Harbour with a number of merchant ships with all necessary material for maintaining their position (Diod. 16.18.3).³² The Syracusans took the opportunity of this arrival and the activity involved in landing the much-needed supplies to launch their own naval strike; in this they proved to be victorious, causing damage and chasing the crews of several of their opponents to the shore. However, instead of remaining vigilant in case of a counterattack, the Syracusans celebrated their success with banquets, while Nysius at the fortifications to the mole presumably saw a chance to regain some of his and his troops' reputations. He ordered his infantry to scale the wall that had been constructed close to the fortifications; those who were first on the opposing structure killed any guards they found there, who were mostly drunk and asleep, and opened gates that had been fitted at intervals into the Syracusan defences. The mercenaries, who Diodorus (16.19.3) numbers at 10,000, charged into Achradina scattering any defenders and killing anyone who opposed their progress; quickly they occupied the agora and then began looting the houses of the wealthy that were situated in this neighbourhood. By

³¹ The other Sicilian Greek and Sicel allies who are said to have joined Dion must have departed to their respective homes long before this episode.

³² Apollocrates' role in such negotiations is not related.

morning, the mercenaries from the Island garrison were in complete control of much of the city, whose inhabitants had been killed, taken captive or had fled. Those citizens still in authority now sent messengers to Dion at Leontini to request that he come to the defence of his city (Plut. *Dion*, 42.4–5).³³ Diodorus claims there was an immediate reaction; and the arrival of Dion with his own mercenaries is made to appear to have happened almost instantaneously. Yet this latest countermeasure must have occurred over a number of days. Leontini may be just a matter of 40 kilometres (25 miles) from Syracuse, but any force of infantry could not have covered this distance and then launched an attack in less than two days. Cavalry might well cover the same distance in a matter of hours, but Dion's mercenaries, like those of Nysius, were mainly hoplite infantry. Furthermore, Plutarch claims that contradictory messages were sent to Dion, some forbidding his entry to the city and others begging for his help. The citizen body remained divided in its opinion; and while this uncertainty occurred, the city was subject to further violent ransacking by Nysius' forces.

However, Nysius does not appear to have maintained as strict a control over his victorious troops as any sensible commander ought to have done, nor to have posted a watch, since he in turn was taken by surprise by the arrival of Dion at the Hexapylon, the city's northern gates. Even with substantial forces at his disposal Nysius seems to have been more content to ravage than to consolidate, although this situation in the estimation of Plutarch was the uproar of the tyranny of Dionysius in its death throes (*Dion*, 44.7–8). Dion's forces immediately occupied Epipolai and moved down the Hecatompodon, the main street from the Hexapylon, and into Achradina; and they in turn defeated the troops of Nysius, of whom 4,000 are said to have been killed.³⁴ The rest retreated in some disorder once again inside their own defences on the mole and the Island. The details of the battles in the streets of the city were invented to illustrate the changing fortunes of each side and that it was the Syracusans in the end who won the upper hand in the conflict. Dion, as a result of his latest triumph, was voted honours and made *strategos autocrator* or 'general with absolute power' by the grateful citizens no doubt guided by the elite.³⁵ Significantly and probably much to the relief of the socio-political hierarchy, the title and powers were identical to those obtained by Dionysius I in 405 and those possessed by his son the tyrant, who was now in exile in Locri.

³³ Plutarch states that seven envoys were chosen: Hellanicus and four others of the Syracusan elite (*hippeis*) and Archonides and Telesides, who represented 'the allies', whoever these may have been at this stage, perhaps other mercenaries rather than other Greek Sicilian cities whose contingents will surely have been withdrawn after Dion's move to Leontini.

³⁴ See Map 3.

³⁵ Diodorus' account of Dion's exploits ends at 16.20.5–6. He does not return to Sicilian affairs until 16.31.7, when he mentions under the year 354/3 that Dion had been murdered.

This must surely have been a source of concern among those other prominent political figures in Syracuse, such as Heraclides, who represented a more democratic stance. They could see easily enough that the prospect of personal prestige and influence, which they might achieve with the advent of a more open style of government, would quickly disappear if Dion took absolute power. According to Plutarch (*Dion*, 48–58), who is the sole source for the last months of Dion's life, these figures began to stir up vocal opposition to Dion's exclusive position.³⁶ They had pledged their support to Dion when his troops were required to defeat the mercenaries of Nysius, but now that the latter was again confined to the Island, according to Plutarch, they set about undermining him. Plutarch has nothing good to say about Heraclides, the leading figure of this group, whom he accuses of having a jealous and wicked nature (*Dion*, 48.9). Far from being a champion of democracy, when he was again elected general in charge of the fleet that was stationed at Messene he made a point of openly criticising Dion. He also insinuated that Dion was aiming to make himself tyrant, but at the same time Heraclides was in secret negotiations with Dionysius, who was then in Locri, and with the Spartan mercenary commander Pharax, who was at Sicilian Neapolis (modern Licata) (Plut. *Dion*, 49.1). Pharax seems to have been one of Dionysius' mercenaries; and Dion, although wanting to delay any outright hostilities between him and the Syracusans, was obliged against his will to lead a force into that part of Sicily. The narrative in Plutarch's account seems confused, although he maintains that a battle was fought and that Dion was defeated. However, the result was not, says Plutarch, due to any deficiency on Dion's part, but rather because of a lack of discipline among his own troops. Preparations to make a counterattack were then foiled when Dion was informed that Heraclides was leading his fleet along the coast to Syracuse. This was evidently taken to be the latest putsch, indicating that Dion had been led away from the city by a deliberate diversionary strategy. He and his closest followers set off at once from Neapolis and made very rapid progress on horseback, returning overnight to Syracuse before Heraclides reached the harbour. Plutarch states that Dion rode 700 stadia in a single night (140 kilometres or 87 miles) and in doing so saved his position at Syracuse.³⁷ It is certainly impossible for such a forced march of this magnitude to have occurred over a single night, especially since the terrain

³⁶ Plutarch casts Heraclides as a demagogue and enemy of Dionysius, 12.1, a good general but not to be trusted as an ally, 32.2–5, who had fallen out with Dion while they were in exile, and who constantly undermined the latter's authority once he returned to Syracuse. Neither Nepos nor Diodorus mentions rivalry from an early stage. Nepos, 6.3–5, notes that Heraclides was as popular among the elite as Dion, while Diodorus stresses cooperation, 16.6.5, 16.6.2, until the views of the citizen body became polarised behind these two individuals, 16.17.3.

³⁷ This is highly reminiscent of Dionysius' forced march to save his own position in 405, see Chapter 7.

is mountainous and the Sicels occupying many of the inland areas were not necessarily friendly. Moreover the route is likely to have been by the old coast road, today the SS115, and the distance is more than 190 kilometres (nearly 120 miles). Plutarch therefore has, as in several other sections in his text, provided dramatic embellishment as a way of elevating Dion's character. In reality he was duped into leading a military campaign, was defeated in battle, and returned to Syracuse all over a period of weeks, while Heraclides was for some other reason delayed in his attempt to gain sole power in the city.

Heraclides had also enlisted the aid of another Spartan mercenary, named Gaesylus, who may initially have entertained ambitions of his own (Plut. *Dion*, 49.5–6). Instead, he was instrumental in bringing about the reconciliation between the protagonists. Heraclides swore loyalty to Dion, but it should be noted that, probably on the initiative of Dion's supporters, the war fleet was beached and the crews disbanded. Heraclides in nearly an instant lost his powerbase, his supporters scattered. The Syracusans are next said to have intensified their siege of the Island from the landward side; and since supplies became dangerously low and no reinforcements appeared from Dionysius, his son Apollocrates, who was still his commander, decided to capitulate. Dion allowed his nephew to leave with his mother, Sophrosyne, and his sisters; and Apollocrates and his party sailed off to Locri in five triremes (Plut. *Dion*, 50.2–3). Quite why Dionysius was unable to send aid must remain a mystery. Once again, Plutarch's narrative lacks credibility, since, if the Syracusans had indeed beached their fleet, what was to prevent Dionysius sending supplies along the coast from Locri or Sicilian Neapolis, both under his control? The garrison on the Island also possessed warships, as is evident by the way the family of Dionysius departed. And what was the fate of Nypsius and all the mercenary troops? Nothing is mentioned in any of the three relevant literary sources. The commander from Campanian Neapolis may well have left with Apollocrates, but thousands of mercenary soldiers and their families must have been given safe conduct to depart. Since the handover of the Island was negotiated, various guarantees must have been given to the defenders; this points again to compromise, and that Dion considered this a better result than continuing the siege.

Victory for the Syracusans should have brought about an end to civil disturbances; and although Plutarch is effusive in his praise for his subject (*Dion*, 52.2: 'was thought to be the greatest of men and bestowed more than any other general with courage and good fortune'), he also notes that Dion was incapable of interacting with others without displaying a certain arrogance and that this must have soured the triumph over Dionysius. Plutarch's comment is also plainly intended to be a signal for subsequent events, showing that an open and level political life in Syracuse was far from being achieved simply because Dion was never a champion of democracy. It is clear that he aimed to install an oligarchic system of government that was then practised in Corinth or even to take on the

role of guardian of the state himself or with the help of a small number of his closest supporters.³⁸ There were strong suspicions that sole rule was his intended goal, since Dion had not allowed the people to destroy the tomb of Dionysius, which stood near the agora or the houses of the ruling dynasty situated on the mole and on the Island.³⁹

There were other problems confronting Dion, not least of which was his feud with Heraclides, who remained the leading pro-democracy figure in the city. For some time, according to Plutarch (*Dion*, 53.5), some unnamed political allies had urged that Heraclides should be murdered, and Dion finally gave way on this issue. Assassins were sent, who killed Heraclides in his home. The greater part of the citizen body was aware of the ultimate author of this murder, but the people were persuaded that the city could never be at peace while both Heraclides and Dion lived. However, no sooner had Heraclides been eliminated, than Callippus made his appearance as the people's advocate. Callippus was an Athenian and a close friend and ally of Dion from the days of his exile and the return, according to Plutarch (*Dion*, 28.4, 54.1–2).⁴⁰ Now he saw that there was an opportunity to advance his own position, since the *demos* or main body of citizens lacked any leadership and looked set to acquiesce in Dion's preferred style of government and his own dominant place in the community. Like Heraclides, Callippus is portrayed in the most negative terms, mainly as unscrupulous and disloyal (Nepos, *Dion*, 8.1; Plut. *Dion*, 54.3), but in the hurly burly of political life in the ancient Greek *polis* there were no rules and even less sentimentalism. Callippus reportedly ingratiated himself into the company of citizens with the same lack of morals and began plotting the murder of Dion.⁴¹ He may well have been spurred on in this venture, since Plutarch reports that after the death of his son Dion was considering making Apollocrates, Dionysius' son, his own heir. This would have been regarded as more than enough justification to eliminate Dion, who would then appear to be handing back to Dionysius control of Syracuse.⁴² Although

³⁸ Plutarch, *Dion*, 53.4, suggests that Dion looked at various options besides the Corinthian oligarchic system, the political organisations of Sparta and the communities on Crete.

³⁹ See Westlake (1969) 263 for the general disquiet about Dion's intentions.

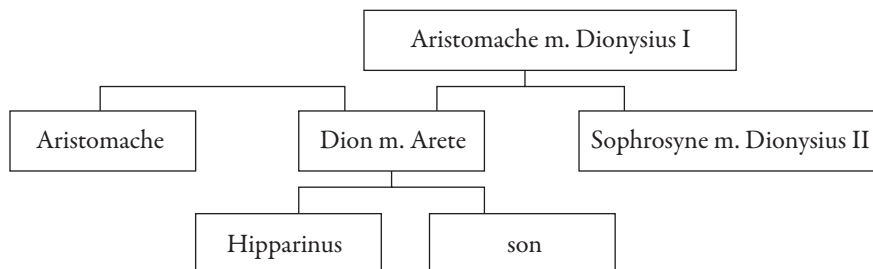
⁴⁰ If Dion had remained in Corinth for the greater part of his exile, as Diodorus and Nepos thought, then Callippus may in fact have been a much later acquaintance.

⁴¹ Dion is said to have seen the ghost of a woman who resembled a Fury using the broom or besom to sweep the floor of his room, Plut. *Dion*, 55.1–4, while, in the parallel Life, that of Brutus, *Brut.* 36.6–7, 48.1, the subject is also confronted with a phantom. In the case of Dion, his son, with whom he had evidently become estranged, committed suicide a few days later. The ghost appeared to Brutus just prior to the battle of Philippi. Ultimately, both episodes were intended by Plutarch to prepare the audience for the death of the subject.

⁴² Nepos, *Dion*, 4.1, like Plutarch, has Hipparinus commit suicide by jumping from the upper storey of a house, but the former does not link the event with an apparition and seems

members of Dion's family, his sister and wife, seem to have been alerted to the possibility of a plot and even confronted Callippus, he strenuously denied the charge (Nepos, *Dion*, 8.5; Plut. *Dion*, 56.4–6). Dion unwisely took no additional precautions.⁴³

Dion's immediate family



At the feast of Demeter and Chorē (Nepos, *Dion*, 9.1), Dion was either entertaining guests (Plut. *Dion*, 57.1) or resting in a room on an upper storey (Nepos, *Dion*, 9.1) when a number of young men who came originally from Zacynthus and were perhaps mercenaries who had participated in Dion's expedition, entered not wearing their cloaks and clearly unarmed.⁴⁴ They jumped on Dion and held him down, trying either to strangle him or to beat him to death. Dion did not struggle, but the assassins were inept or half-hearted in the enterprise. Someone called for a sword, but those standing guard at the door would not open it in case Dion's supporters came to the rescue. The scene is obscure, since Plutarch states that Dion was entertaining several friends who chose not to be involved in order to save their own lives (Plut. *Dion*, 57.3–4). However, Nepos claims that there were guards in the house who could have saved their leader, but, since they were also not committed to him, they chose to ignore what was happening (Nepos, *Dion*, 9.5). Finally, a Syracusan named Lyco (Nepos, *Dion*, 9.6) or Lycon (Plut. *Dion*, 57.4) handed across a sword (Nepos)

to date it rather earlier and soon after the return of Dion from exile. Note the doublet of the 'upper storey' in the death of father and son.

⁴³ Callippus is said to have been forced to swear by Demeter and Persephone that he was innocent of the charges against him; this he willingly obliged, although both he and Dion had been initiated into the cult. Callippus, according to Plutarch, had introduced Dion into the Eleusinian mysteries. Note that none of these details is recorded by Diodorus, except for a brief notice (16.31.7) that Dion was murdered by men from Zacynthus who had been hired by Callippus.

⁴⁴ This festival was perhaps in May rather than later in the year. Diodorus (5.4) notes the existence of the cult at Syracuse.

or a Spartan dagger (Plutarch) and one of the Zacynthians cut Dion's throat as if, says Plutarch (*Dion*, 57.4), he were a sacrificial victim at an altar. Plutarch concludes his *Life of Dion* with a digression on Callippus and then the fate of Dion's sister and wife. Nepos, however, has some interesting additional details on the events that occurred immediately after Dion's murder. He writes that a crowd of citizens entered the house to view the murder scene and some of these were killed when others arrived who suspected them of being the murderers or complicit in the crime (Nepos, *Dion*, 10.1). Those who had denigrated Dion's character while he lived now sang his praises, voting for a funeral at public expense with a tomb erected in the busiest spot of the city.⁴⁵ Dion had returned to Sicily in the summer of 356 and he was killed in the early summer of 353. His death was sordid and not heroic in the least. He did not possess a sword to defend himself, but possibly this visible lack of defence was in deliberate imitation of Gelon, whom he is said to have admired (Plut. *Dion*, 5.9–10), and who in later life had not felt the need for a bodyguard.

Dion's successful attempt to obtain supreme power recalls the activities of Hermocrates in 408, although the latter was unsuccessful in achieving his ambitions. Still, in antiquity and ever since, both have been held in high regard although neither was a champion of freedom. In many respects, Dion was a Syracusan Alcibiades or Coriolanus. He was a highly educated member of the Syracusan elite and perhaps truly an admirer of Plato and philosophic circles, but this was never allowed to get in the way of what really mattered, which was political supremacy. Had Dion not been murdered, his rule would almost certainly have become more autocratic, because his entire life and character had been shaped more by tyranny than by philosophy. It could be argued that states needed larger-than-life figures such as Alcibiades or Coriolanus to enhance the dramatic narrative of the history. They also lent strength to the states they endeavoured to undermine. Alcibiades gave Athenian democracy strength in a period of extreme adversity, while Coriolanus gave Rome family values and loyalty. Coriolanus was a general of some reputation and Alcibiades too had his moments as a general, but Dion does not compare in stature to either, although the manner of their deaths bears certain similarities.⁴⁶ Dion may have had an intellectual side to his character, but essentially he was a politician. The evidence

⁴⁵ Nepos does not give the location, but it was probably in the agora.

⁴⁶ The tradition about Coriolanus varied from him being stoned to living a long life in peace. Alcibiades died fighting after he was discovered in a house with his companion, the prostitute Timandra. His assassins fired the house; Alcibiades, armed with a sword but no shield, came out to confront them. They stayed well out of reach and completed their task by use of arrows and javelins, Plut. *Alc.* 39.3. Plutarch, *Alc.* 39.1–2, claims that his subject also had a vision or dream that foretold his death. Timandra, in another quirk of fate, was Sicilian by birth, from the town Hyccara, which had been sacked by the troops of Nicias and its population enslaved. See Chapter 6.

seems quite precise: Dion was merely a dilettante or an interested party in the intellectual and cultural milieu of his day.

While Dion's way of life may have been prosaic in comparison to the flamboyant lifestyle of Alcibiades, both were exiled because they were regarded as a threat to existing political structures.⁴⁷ Dion was seen as an alternative to his brother-in-law, and Alcibiades was thought to be undermining the democracy in Athens. Dion, like Alcibiades, was very close to the centre of power. Dion had the closest possible family ties to the ruler and Alcibiades was the nephew of Pericles. Both were highly educated, perhaps beyond what was usual even among elite families. Alcibiades moved easily within the circle of Socrates and was familiar with Plato and Xenophon. Dion became an ardent admirer of Plato, whom he may have met for the first time when the latter was already in Syracuse, and later considered himself among the philosopher's circle. There are various traditions about their first meeting, since Nepos (*Dion*, 2.2) claims that Plato was in Tarentum and responded to an invitation by the elder Dionysius to come to Syracuse, and that the tyrant had been persuaded to issue this by Dion, who already knew of the philosopher. Plutarch (*Dion*, 4.4) does not connect Plato's visit with either an invitation from Dionysius or from an existing interest by Dion, but rather he asserts that it was the will of the gods that brought Plato from Italy to Syracuse. Plutarch used as his main source for his Life of Dion the seventh letter of Plato, but he also refers to other sources, since he suggests that the philosopher's arrival in Syracuse was the distant beginning of the undermining of the tyranny.⁴⁸ Plato's first visit is dated to 388/7 and the tyranny lasted for another 40 years, but Timaeus, whom Plutarch also references (*Dion*, 6.3), is credited with the habit of posting dramatic forecasts in his account to hold the attention of his audience.⁴⁹ Alcibiades' connections with Socrates and Pericles did not do much to save his reputation, but Dion's friendship with Plato certainly did. Dion lacked the intellectual impulse to become a true philosopher simply from intimate association with a tyrant and because his life, indeed his *raison d'être*, revolved around a ruler's court. This was the place where his ambitions might be fulfilled, not in discourse in the agora or Academy. Dion had probably served under Dionysius in one of the campaigns in the 480s when he was a young adult. However, there is no anecdotal evidence of distinction in

⁴⁷ Cf. Westlake (1968) 259, who argues that Thucydides considered Alcibiades to be irrelevant to the outcome of the war.

⁴⁸ Mossé (2006) 190–91 suggests almost a chance meeting, but he adds that later during the rule of Dionysius II the tyrant resented the friendship between his brother-in-law and Plato. Plato may have visited Syracuse three times, but the issue is complicated since this assumption is based on *Epistle* 7. See note 22 and Appendix 6. Plutarch follows this evidence without question. A first visit is dated to about 388 (Plut. *Dion*, 4.4–5), a second to about 367/6 (*Dion*, 13.1) and a third perhaps to about 360 (*Dion*, 18.9). Plato died in 348/7.

⁴⁹ For Timaeus' narrative style, see Pearson (1987) 205–6.

battle or any capacity in leadership, while praise of him as a commander later on is rather vague and consists mostly of topical elements. Dion was clearly never a warrior as Dionysius I sought to be, winning no battles and leading no successful campaigns prior to his return to Sicily in 356. Quite the contrary, the sources, for all their apparent praise, actually deliver more a sense of deep personal frustration in his shortcomings, while those around him felt equal unease and anxiety.

The sudden and unexpected fashion in which the younger Dionysius abandoned control of Syracuse and withdrew to Locri drew surprised comments from the ancient sources, who noted his huge resources in comparison to the meagre forces at Dion's disposal.⁵⁰ However, Dionysius retained control of the Island and was able to supply this fortress with apparent ease; and without this acropolis, the city was unsafe. Therefore, it is plausible to suggest that this whole episode was planned by the tyrant and that either Dion was taken in by the strategy or he had no influence over the process. Dionysius had known Dion all his life and was well aware of his rather forbidding personality. The tyrant also knew his people well and he recognised that they were likely to tire of such a grim master much sooner than of a ruler whose appeal was to the broader populace and not just to the elite. The characterisation of the younger Dionysius is therefore also open to some reappraisal, since no autocrat can rule for over 10 years when there appears to have been no sight of insurrection or disapproval and then rule his second city for another 10 years if he lacks all ability and resources to maintain his position. Dionysius should at least be granted some perspicacity and understanding of the Syracuse and Dion. His ultimate loss of control of Syracuse (and Locri) lay in the fragmentation of his powerbase and the decline in the prosperity of the city, but for this he was only as much to blame as the various contenders to his rule.⁵¹

The lack of any secure tradition in democratic institutions at Syracuse meant that the withdrawal of Dionysius in 356, followed by his eldest son and other family members about a year later, left Dion *de facto* ruler. His preference for some form of oligarchic government or even his own primacy resulted in uncertainty. His lack of capacity to enforce either a new governmental system quickly or to allow competitors to participate in public life fostered the plots

⁵⁰ See Appendix 6.

⁵¹ See Talbert (1974) 104–6, who argues that Dionysius knew he would be spared by Timoleon but not by Hicetas, a former ally of Dion. However, Dionysius surrendered to Timoleon in 344 and Timoleon allowed him to go into comfortable exile, seemingly on the same terms as the tyrant had dismissed Dion in 366, a doublet not noted in modern works. It is certainly possible that he was spared because of his previous generosity towards Dion; and it is also tempting to consider that Dionysius tried the same tactic a second time but on the later occasion he was unsuccessful. For Timoleon outsmarting Dionysius, see Westlake (1951) 27–8.



Figure 8.3 View over Syracuse, the Island and the Great Harbour from the Eurialos end of the Epipolai plateau. Nicias will have viewed the city from this place when the Athenian troops occupied Epipolai in April or May 414.

against him. There is no mention that he allowed the supporters of democracy exiled by the tyrants to return; and so his death left Callippus in sole control. Plutarch derides this new ruler as unfit to govern and although Callippus was an Athenian, he says (*Dion*, 58.2) he was,

The product of a land that yielded men of the very best and the worst characters just like its soil provided the sweetest honey and the deadly hemlock.

After a little more than a year in power, probably because he realised he needed to win military prestige, Callippus chose to lead an expedition against nearby Catane (Diod. 16.31.7). This city seems to have fallen to his forces, which, by then as usual, consisted mostly of mercenary troops. But in his absence, the Syracusan supporters of Dion, whose leading figure was Hicetas, took control of the city and Callippus was excluded. Callippus next attacked Messene, but he was unable to occupy this strategic city. His intention may have been to gain

control of the harbour there, from which he might raise a fleet, sail along the coast and reoccupy Syracuse from the sea. His failure to take Messene caused further desertions among his mercenaries, although he was still able to establish himself in Rhegium.⁵² Soon afterwards, according to Plutarch (*Dion*, 58.7), he was murdered by two of his lieutenants, Leptines and Polyperchon.⁵³

Diodorus presents a less negative record of events after noting Callippus' role in the murder of Dion. His record of events in Sicily is very brief, but the evidence is probably more accurate than that related by Plutarch. Diodorus (16.36.5) relates that Callippus first expelled Dion's supporters from Syracuse and that these, among whom Hicetas was a leading figure, established themselves at Leontini, but then the Athenian was in turn expelled from the city when Hipparinus and Nisaeus, the two half-brothers of Dionysius II, returned, recaptured the city and ruled there together for two years.⁵⁴ Diodorus has no account of Callippus' attempt to capture Messene, but he notes that he occupied Rhegium, which had been garrisoned by troops loyal to Dionysius, and that he returned control of this city to its citizens. Hipparinus died in 351, either assassinated or from drunken excess, and his brother Nisaeus maintained himself on at least the Island for nearly another five years before Dionysius returned to oust him. Dionysius regained control of the Island, but the citizens of the city, thoroughly weary of the *stasis* that had engulfed them for over a decade, sent a delegation to Corinth urgently requesting aid to bring peace to Syracuse.⁵⁵

By the mid-440s, Syracuse must have been bankrupt and its economy in ruins. The harbours could not easily be used for trade, which was the lifeblood of the community because of fears of constant attack by various bands of mercenary soldiers who were barely superior to bandits but far better trained. The Syracusans had returned to the state of anarchy they had experienced in the second half of the 460s, but this trough dipped far deeper and was arguably almost the demise of the *polis*. The decade between the death of Dion and the arrival of Timoleon in Sicily is largely missing from any ancient account and only

⁵² Rhegium had been destroyed by the elder Dionysius, but the city was re-established in 360 by his son, who renamed it Phoebia, Strabo, 6.1.6; Evans (2009) 124, 150.

⁵³ Leptines was a son of the elder Leptines, hence cousin of the tyrant, and he was sent by Timoleon to join Dionysius in exile, Diod. 16.72.5. Leptines had established himself at Engyum after the death of Callippus.

⁵⁴ It is simply not possible that Hipparinus and Nisaeus could have returned to Syracuse without at least the tacit support of Dionysius in this venture, but that the former tyrant made no attempt to return to Syracuse himself, preferring to remain in Locri. Hipparinus occupied at least the Island and probably Achradina, while Hicetas held Leontini and perhaps a toehold in one of the outer suburbs of Syracuse.

⁵⁵ On this lost decade, see the brief summaries of Freeman (1891–94) 4.290–93, Talbert (1997) 151. For the connections between Syracuse and its metropolis Corinth in the fourth century, see Talbert (1974) 52–5.

the excessive behaviour of some of the leading figures, such as the alcoholism of Hipparinus (Athenaeus, *Deip.* 10.47), was considered interesting enough to warrant attention and record. Plutarch in his *Life of Timoleon* mostly takes up the account from the arrival of his subject at Tauromenium and does not cast a retrospective glance at the affairs of Syracuse in the preceding ten years.⁵⁶ This decade therefore becomes as impenetrable and for us as empty as the decade following the expulsion of the Deinomenid Thrasybulus in 466. It was only with the activities of Timoleon that interest in Sicily and Sicilian affairs revived. And it ought not to be forgotten that, as a result of Dion's rebellion, Syracuse lost a tyrant but in exchange received over a decade of instability and increasing impoverishment with commensurate loss of power and prestige. Indeed, the period from 354/3 to 344 was certainly as critical for Syracuse as the decade following the expulsion of the tyrant Thrasybulus in 466, and with similar results. Dion may have been well intentioned, although his actions are not at all fully clear or open to scrutiny. His immediate bequest to Syracuse was mayhem. From the ruins of that latest bout of *stasis*, Timoleon was able to restore democracy not only in Syracuse but throughout the Hellenised communities in Sicily.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ See Pearson (1987) 206–7 for the dearth of source material for 353–344, that what there is must be mostly derived from Timaeus.

⁵⁷ With the exception of the tyranny at Tauromenium, since its ruler Andromachus, father of Timaeus the historian, had received and supported Timoleon from the moment of his arrival from Corinth.

Epilogue

The history of Syracuse from its foundation to the chaos into which the city was pitched in the 340s is as dramatic as if it were a creation of fiction. Fiction is, of course, an underlying problem in any attempt to study Syracuse. Its beginning was certainly an invention and the antiquity ascribed to it by Thucydides derived from a patriotic source. The power the city acquired in the early part of the fifth century was the result of clever management of human resources by Gelon and Hieron. Without their guiding hands, the whole edifice crashed in spectacular fashion in the 460s and there followed decades of uncertainty. Only with the defeat of the Athenian invasion in 413 was Syracusan confidence fully restored, but it was rapidly undermined in the crisis caused by a sustained Carthaginian invasion of Sicily, and the way was open for Dionysius to seize power. The rule of the tyrants again produced favourable results; and during the next 50 years, the prosperity of Syracuse attained new peaks. Therefore, the removal of sole rule once again produced not order, but discord. The inability of Dion or one of his many competitors to bring security to the city almost caused its demise. Luckily wise counsel prevailed and Timoleon arrived to restore calm; Syracuse, like the proverbial phoenix, was reborn from the fiery ashes of its ruined predecessor. Cicero's statement (*in Verr.* 2.4.117) could, therefore, not have been more apposite:

You have often heard that the greatest city of the Greeks and the most beautiful of them all is that of the Syracusans.

Urbem Syracusas maximam esse Graecarum, pulcherrimam omnium saepe audistis.

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A Chronology of Syracuse

Between 740 and 710 BC	Foundations of Rhegium and Zancle
710–700	Foundations of Sybaris and Taras
690–680	Croton founded
690–685	Naxos, the first Greek settlement in Sicily, founded
680–675	Foundation of Syracuse by Archias
Between 675 and 660	Foundations of Leontini, Catane and Megara Hyblaea
610–600	Approximate date of the temple of Apollo on the Island
590	Approximate date of the Olympieion at Polichne
550 (approx.)	Achradina became a part of the city
500/495	Murder of Cleander at Gela
500	Start of the construction of the temple of Artemis on the Island
490s	Camarina destroyed by Syracuse and civil unrest in Syracuse
493	Hippocrates at Zancle
492/1	Hippocrates defeated the Syracusans near Elorus and besieged the city
492/1	Death of Hippocrates and succession of Gelon
491–85	Gelon ruler in Gela
490/85	Camarina destroyed
488	Gelon's horse won at the Olympic Games
485	Gelon invited to become ruler of Syracuse
485/80	Megara Hyblaea and Sicilian Euboea destroyed
480s	Camarina destroyed a second time
482	Hieron's horse won at the Pythian Games
480	Carthaginian army at Panormus and Himera

- 480 Battle of Himera in the course of summer 480 between July and September; Hamilcar killed in the battle
- 480 Construction began on the temple of Athena on the Island
- 478 Death of Gelon (January–March)
- 478 Hieron succeeded his brother Gelon as ruler of Syracuse (Diod. 11.38.3)
- 478 Hieron's horse won at the Delphic Games
- 476 New settlers in Naxos; Naxians and Catanacans removed to Leontini
- 476/4 Catane renamed Aetna and repopulated by Hieron (Diod. 11.49.1–2)
- 476 Hieron's horse won at the Olympic Games
- 474 Hieron's defeat of the Etruscans at Cumae; a Syracusan garrison on Ischia
- 474 Re-foundation of Catane
- 472 Hieron's horse won at Olympia
- 472 Hieron victor over Thrasydaeus, tyrant of Acragas (Diod. 11.53.4)
- 472 Aeschylus' *Persae* produced in Athens and later in Syracuse
- 470s Pindar and Simonides in Syracuse
- 468 Hieron's chariot won at Olympia
- 467 Death of Hieron (September–November) (Diod. 11.66)
- 466 Expulsion of Thrasybulus (September–November) to Locri
- 463 Coalition of Ducetius' Sicels and Syracusans attacked Catane
- 461/60 Withdrawal of mercenaries from Syracuse
- 461/60 Syracusans allied with Ducetius attacked Catane (Aetna)
- 460 A democracy established in Syracuse
- 460 Citizens of Catane returned to their homes; the mercenaries of Hieron re-founded Aetna at Inessa
- 460–58 War with Ducetius
- 459 Menaenum founded by Ducetius, who also sacked Morgantina

- 458 *Oresteia* produced in Athens
- 456 Death of Aeschylus at Gela
- 455/4 War between Segesta and Lilybaeum
- 454 Attempted coup of Tyndarides at Syracuse; *stasis* in the city (Diod. 11.85.3)
- 454/3 Petalism introduced at Syracuse
- 453/2 Syracusan warships in operations against the Etruscans
- 453/2 Ducetius extended his control of the interior of Sicily
- 450? Petalism repealed
- 450 Ducetius defeated near Motyum and exiled to Corinth
- 446 Ducetius led settlers to the north coast of Sicily
- 446 Battle at Himera River between Syracuse and Acragas
- 442 Widespread peace in Sicily (Diod. 12.26.3)
- 440 Death of Ducetius and destruction of Trinacria (Palicē)
- 439 Diodorus claims that Syracusans invested heavily in new warships and increased the size of their army
- 435 War between Corinth and Corcyra, but Syracuse apparently neutral
- 427 Athenians sent 20 warships to Sicily and based at Rhegium
- Athenian attack on Lipara
- Death of Charoeades in a sea battle with Syracusan near Megara Hyblaea
- 426 Athenian success at Mylae and submission of Messene
- Athenians attacked Inessa and Locri
- 426/5 Syracusans built warships
- 425 Syracusan fleet of 10 ships arrived in Messene
- 424 Congress at Gela and speech of Hermocrates
- 424 Antiochus completed his history; Herodotus died, perhaps at Thurii
- 423/2 Renewal of disputes between Leontini and Syracuse

194	<i>A Chronology of Syracuse</i>
422	Phaeax on a fact-finding visit to Magna Graecia and Sicily
415	(May) Envoys from Leontini and Segesta in Athens (June) Despatch of Athenian fleet and army to Sicily (July) Speeches of Hermocrates and Athenagoras at Syracuse (Aug.) Athenians at Rhegium (Sept.) Athenians captured Hyccara (Oct.) Athenians landed at Dascon and defeated the Syracusan army (Nov./Dec.) Meeting of Sicilian Greeks and the Athenians at Camarina
414	(May) Athenian landing at Leon and assault on Epipolai (Nov.) Letter of Nicias to the Athenian <i>demos</i> (21 Dec.) Despatch of Eurymedon to Syracuse
413	(Aug.) Demosthenes arrived in Sicily with the relief fleet; death of Eurymedon (8 Sept.) Lunar eclipse and delay of the Athenians (Sept.) Final battle in the Great Harbour (Oct.) Destruction of the Athenian expedition; murder of Nicias and Demosthenes; Athenian prisoners held in the stone quarries
412	Hermocrates in the Peloponnese and in Asia Minor, relieved of his command after the defeat at Cyzicus
412/11	Constitutional reforms of Diocles

- 409 Sack of Selinous and Himera by the Carthaginian forces led by Hannibal son of Hamilcar
- 409/8 Birth of Dion
- 408 Hermocrates active in western Sicily
- 408 Exile of Diocles and death of Hermocrates
- 407 Diplomatic contacts between Syracuse and Carthage
- 406 Carthaginian invasion of Sicily and sack of Acragas
- 405 Carthaginian attack on Gela and treaty with Syracuse; Dionysius elected *strategos autocrator*
- 398 Marriage of Dionysius to Doris of Locri and Aristomache of Syracuse
- 397 Dionysius attacked and sacked Motya
- 396 Siege of Syracuse by the Carthaginians led by Himilcon
- 396 Unsuccessful Carthaginian siege of Syracuse
- 395 (approx.) Birth of the younger Dionysius
- 394/3 Sophrosyne born
- 390 (?) Philoxenus imprisoned in Syracuse
- 388 Plato's first visit to Syracuse
- 386/4 Exile of Philistus (recalled 366?) to Thurii/Adria/Epirus
- 375 Apollocrates, son of Dionysius II, born
- 373 Birth of Hipparinus, son of Dion (Plato, *Ep.* 7.324B)
- 367 Death of Dionysius I and succession of Dionysius II; Plato in Syracuse
- 366 Dion exiled to Corinth
- 360 (?) Plato's third visit to Syracuse
- 356 (Summer) Dion returned to Syracuse via North Africa and Heraclea Minoa
- 356/5 Dionysius withdrew to Locri; Apollocrates on the Island
- 353 Apollocrates surrendered the Island to Dion
- 353 Hipparinus committed suicide; murder of Heraclides followed by the murder of Dion (May)

353/2	Rule of Callippus; murder of Aristomache and Arete
352	Callippus expelled from Syracuse (June) and murdered at Rhegium
352	Hipparinus and Nisaeus seized the Island
352–350	Hipparinus, son of Dionysius I, ruled in Syracuse
350–346	Nisaeus, son of Dionysius I, ruled in Syracuse
346	Return of Dionysius to Syracuse; murder of Sophrosyne
344	Hicetas in Syracuse; Dionysius on the Island
344	Arrival of Timoleon in Tauromenium; Dionysius went into exile at Corinth

Appendix 1

Literary Sources for the Earliest History of Syracuse

First Contacts between Greece and Sicily

Fifty-two young men were chosen, and when they had been ordered they went down to the shore of the empty ocean, and when they reached the ship on the beach they carried it down into deep water, stowed away the mast and sails in the dark ship, made the oars secure in leather straps and ... anchored the ship well out from the shore. (Homer, *Odyssey*, 8.50)

I divided my crew into two companies, each one with its own leader. I led the first, Eurylochus the second. He went off leading twenty-two of the crew ... they left the rest of us. (Homer, *Odyssey*, 10.204 – Odysseus on the island of Circe)

There was also an old Sicilian woman who tended her old master [Laertes] faithfully on this farm out of the town. (Homer, *Odyssey*, 24.260)

As they were starting to eat, old Dolius and his sons appeared tired with working on their farm, which they had left, when the old Sicilian went out and called them. She was the mother of the young men and she looked after them and lovingly tended their father Dolius now that he was old.¹ (Homer, *Odyssey*, 24.430)

The Foundation of the City

Traditional dates (in western chronology) for the Greek cities in Sicily

735	Naxos (temple of Apollo <i>Archegetes</i>)
734/3	Syracuse
730	Corcyra
729/8	Leontini
728/7	Megara Hyblaea
725	Catane

¹ The presence of the Sicilian women in Homer's *Odyssey* was the basis of the argument advanced by Samuel Butler (1897) that this epic poem had an authoress. The theme was later developed in a fictional account by Robert Graves (1955).

689	Gela
664	Acrae
644	Casmenae
625	Selinous
599	Camarina
581	Acragas

The first Greeks to come (to Sicily) were Chalcidians from Euboea led by Thucles, who founded Naxos and erected a shrine to Apollo Archegetes, which is situated outside the city and where those making the journey to the games sacrifice before leaving the Island. In the next year Syracuse was established by Archias of the Corinthian Heraclidae. He first expelled the Sicels from the Island, which is now the acropolis, and a peninsula. Later on, the outer suburbs were also walled and the whole city became densely populated. (Thucydides, 6.3.1–2)

Five years after Syracuse was founded, Thucles and the Chalcidians went out from Naxos and settled Leontini and after it Catane when in a war they had driven away the Sicels. About the same time, Lamis came to Sicily intent on setting up a settlement from Megara. He first halted at a place called Trotilus ... and then Thapsus, where he died. His followers were driven out of Thapsus and then made their home at a spot called Megara Hyblaea ... After they had lived there for 245 years, they were expelled by Gelon, tyrant of Syracuse (485–478 BC). (Thucydides, 6.3.3–4.2)

Gela was founded 45 years after the settlement of Syracuse. And 108 years later, the Geloans founded Acragas. (Thucydides, 6.4.3–4)

Acrae and Casmenae were founded by the Syracusans: Acrae 70 years after Syracuse, Casmenae nearly 20 years after Acrae. Camarina was first settled by Syracusans about 135 years after the foundation of Syracuse. (Thucydides, 6.5.1)

When the Heraclidae divided up the land, they made an exception of the territory of Corinth ... and gave it to Aletes. After his death, the kingship was handed down by the eldest son of his descendants until the rule of Cypselus, which began 447 years after the return of the Heraclidae (657 BC). And the Bacchidae were the descendants of Heracles ... this form of government continued for 90 years until it was destroyed by the tyranny that Cypselus founded. (Diodorus, 7.9.3–6)

Archias the Corinthian (founder of Syracuse) desired Actaeon, and first of all sent a messenger to him promising him all manner of gifts; and when he was unable to win in this, the young man ... collected a number of followers who were ready to use force ... When Archias was drunk he summoned this crowd ... broke into the house of Actaeon's father [Melissus] ... in a violent struggle ... the object of Archias' lust was found dead. (Diodorus, 8.10)

Myscellus the Achaean went from Rhye to Delphi ... although the oracle commanded Myscellus to settle at Croton, admiring the land of Sybaris he wanted to settle in that place (Diodorus, 8.17)

According to Antiochus, when the god told the Achaeans to settle at Croton, Myscellus went to inspect the site, but when he found that Sybaris had already been founded ... he considered it a better location. He therefore returned to question the god whether it would be better to take this place instead of Croton. The god [Apollo] said ... 'It is right what one gives to you and which you approve,' and Myscellus returned and settled at Croton, and had as one of his followers Archias the founder of Syracuse, who by chance was sailing by while on the way to found his own city. (Strabo, 6.1.12)

Archias founded the city of the Syracusans having sailed from Corinth about the same time as Naxos and Megara were established. They say that Archias and Myscellus went to Delphi at the same time in order to ask the god for an oracle, and while they were there they were first asked whether they preferred wealth or health. And Archias chose wealth and Myscellus health, and it was given to the one to found the city of the Syracusans and to the other to found the city of Croton. (Strabo, 6.2.4)

When Archias was on his voyage to Sicily, he left behind Chersicrates of the Heraclidae with other followers to settle what is now called Corcyra but was then known as Scheria. (Strabo, 6.2.4)

In the old days, it was a city with five districts and had a wall 180 stadia (36 kilometres or 22 miles) in length. The Island, being nearby, is joined by a bridge to the mainland. On each side of the Island there is a large harbour and the greater of the two is 80 stadia (16 kilometres or 10 miles) in circumference. (Strabo, 6.2.4)

Proposed Chronology Changes (all dates approximate)

	Traditional Date	Proposed Date
[Homer's Odyssey	750	700]
Sybaris	720	710–700
Croton	710	690/80
Naxos	735	690/85
Corcyra	730	680/75
Syracuse	734	680/75
[Bacchidae expelled from Corinth	657	680/75]
Leontini	729/8	675/70
Catane	725	670/65
Megara Hyblaea	728/7	675/70
Gela	689	650/30
Acrae	664	610/00
Casmenae	644	590/80
Selinous	625	570/60
Camarina	599	550/40
Acragas	581	550/40

Appendix 2

The Deinomenid Rulers in Fifth Century BC Literature

Their commission of praise poetry in celebration of victories in the Panhellenic festivals confirms the wealth and prestige of the Deinomenid rulers of Syracuse. The rulers of Acragas related through dynastic marriage ties with the family of Gelon were also liberal benefactors in the arts, as is evident from the commissions in their name. The choice of Pindar as author of many of these poems, who was certainly the leading literary figure in this genre and who spent some time in Syracuse in the 470s,¹ illustrates the taste and resources of the Sicilian Greeks. The celebration of Hieron's victory at Olympia in 468 was celebrated by the poet Bacchylides alone and may reflect a preference for a less elaborate style than that of Pindar. The younger poet may also have charged less for his commission! There are more epinikian poems dedicated to Hieron than to any other contemporary figure in the extant corpus of Pindar.²

Herodotus, perhaps from his experience of living in Magna Graecia, seems to have appreciated the significance of the Deinomenids, but his subject precluded much attention to them. The Syracusan historian Antiochus must have covered this period towards the end of his history, but no mention of his comments about Syracusan tyranny has been preserved in later commentators.³ Philistus must also have related the achievements of Gelon and Hieron and the chaos that followed the loss of power by Thrasybulus.⁴ Corax the pre-Socratic philosopher and one of the earliest rhetoricians was a Syracusan citizen, active during the period of the Deinomenids. His prominence also points to a vibrant cultural scene, which must surely have benefited from the favour of Hieron's desire to be seen as patron.⁵ It is highly probable, therefore, that Dionysius I consciously

¹ Sandys (1915) 52.

² See also the discussion of Freeman (1891–94) 2.536–42.

³ Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*Roman Antiquities*) and Strabo both employed Antiochus for the foundation dates of cities in Magna Graecia. Of particular importance is the fact that Dionysius (*AR* 2.59) relates that Croton was founded in 710/9 and Eusebius gives an even later date of 708, Pearson (1987) 15.

⁴ No useful fragments survive, Pearson (1987) 25–6, but the Deinomenids will have been covered in Books 4 and 5 of Philistus' seven-book account of Syracuse from the foundation through to the rise of Dionysius.

⁵ Note that Aeschylus' *Persae* was produced in Syracuse probably within a year or so of its first production at Athens in 472 and that the playwright spent time in the city and later settled in Gela, where Thrasybulus was probably the ruler. Aeschylus went on to write

set out to be an exemplary patron of arts and culture to excel his predecessors in sole power.

Pindar ⁶	<i>Olympian Ode</i> 1 (476) – Hieron
	[<i>Olympian Ode</i> 2 (476) – Theron of Acragas ⁷]
	[<i>Olympian Ode</i> 3 (476) – Theron of Acragas]
	[<i>Olympian Ode</i> 6 (472?) – Hegesias of Syracuse]
	<i>Pythian Ode</i> 1 (470) – Hieron
	<i>Pythian Ode</i> 2 (477–70) – Hieron
	<i>Pythian Ode</i> 3 (474?) – Hieron
	[<i>Pythian Ode</i> 6 (490) – Xenocrates of Acragas (brother of Theron)]
	<i>Nemean Ode</i> 1 (476?) – Chromius ⁸
	<i>Nemean Ode</i> 2 (474?) – Chromius
	[<i>Isthmian Ode</i> 2 (472?) – Xenocrates of Acragas]
Bacchylides ⁹	<i>Olympian Ode</i> 5 (476) – Hieron
	<i>Pythian Ode</i> 4 (470) – Hieron
	<i>Olympian Ode</i> 3 (468) – Hieron
Herodotus	Book 7.145–68

his most famous plays while a resident in Gela: *The Women of Aetna*, *Prometheus Bound* and the trilogy *Oresteia*. No allusions to the Deinomenids have been identified. And it would be interesting to know whether Aeschylus made frequent visits to Athens to oversee the productions of his tragedies in the various festivals of the time, or whether the manuscripts were entrusted to others. It certainly conjures up the image of the prototype ‘jet-setting’ dramatis: ‘Athens today, Syracuse tomorrow.’

⁶ The traditional numbering and placement in the corpus is employed here.

⁷ Pindar also composed victory odes for Thrasybulus, the son of Theron’s brother Xenocrates, such as fragment 124, Sandys (1915). A large number of odes were also written for private individuals from other cities in Greece, Sicily and Magna Graecia for success in various competitions, illustrating the wealth that could command such compositions.

⁸ Chromius was a Gelolan and a close political ally of Hieron; and later he was guardian of the tyrant’s son Deinomenes.

⁹ For the dates and sequence, see Maehler (2004) 9, 79–129. Bacchylides evidently composed at least one other ode in praise of Hieron, which survives as fragment 20C, Fearn (2007) 40.

Thucydides	Book 6.4.2, 6.94.1
Simonides ¹⁰	No extant material, but Diodorus (11.26.7) – the inscription set up by Gelon at Delphi perhaps composed by Simonides frag. 106), Oldfather (1946) 194–5 and n. 3
Aeschylus	Settled in Gela, where he died in 456. In 458 his trilogy the <i>Oresteia</i> was produced in Athens yet was composed during his stay in Sicily

¹⁰ Simonides was perhaps also a visitor to Syracuse during the rule of Hieron, Pearson (1987) 131–2.

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Appendix 3

Ancient Literary Sources for the Deinomenid Tyranny

The Syracusans and Others

Gelon brought to Syracuse all the people of Camarina, which he had destroyed, and made them citizens; and he did the same for more than half the people of Gela. The Sicilian Megara also made a contribution ... the elite ... were brought to Syracuse and made citizens like the rest. Sicilian Euboea received a similar treatment. In both of these cases, Gelon was motivated by the belief that living with the *demos* was unpleasant. In this way, Gelon became a powerful tyrant. (Herodotus, 7.156)

They lived here (Megara Hyblaea) for 245 years, when they were expelled from their city and their land by Gelon, tyrant of Syracuse. (Thucydides, 6.4.2)

Camarina was founded initially by the Syracusans ... but the citizens of Camarina were expelled by the Syracusans, who waged war against them for rebelling. Later on, Hippocrates, ruler of Gela, acquired this land in exchange for returning some Syracusan prisoners and re-established Camarina with himself as founder. The citizens were again expelled by Gelon and the city was founded a third time by the Geloans. (Thucydides, 6.5.3)

Hieron (476 BC) removed the people of Naxos and Catane from their cities and despatched other settlers having collected 5,000 from the Peloponnese and added to these others from Syracuse. He changed the name of Catane to Aetna, and not only the territory of Catane but also much besides he divided up among 10,000 new citizens. (Diodorus, 11.49.1)

Catane is a foundation of the citizens of Naxos ... Catane lost its original citizens, others being sent as citizens by Hieron, tyrant of Syracuse, and naming it Aetna instead of Catane. (Strabo 6.2.3)

Of the remaining sides of Sicily, the coast lying between Cape Pachynus and Lilybaeum has been left utterly deserted, but some trace has been preserved of ancient settlements, among which was Camarina, a foundation of Syracuse. (Strabo, 6.2.5)

The End of the Tyranny

(466 BC) After the death of Hieron, Thrasybulus, having taken the rule of Syracuse, outdid his brother in misdeeds. For since he was violent and bloodthirsty he murdered many of the citizens and exiled as many on trumped-up charges, confiscating their property for his treasury. He hired many mercenaries and organised forces in opposition to those of the citizen body. Thrasybulus, seeing the entire city under arms against him, firstly attempted to put a stop to the rebellion by negotiation. However, when he recognised that this revolt was unstoppable, he called up the citizens settled by Hieron at Catane, many other allies and large numbers of mercenaries so that altogether he had almost 15,000 armed men. Then he occupied Achradina, as it is known, and the Island, which was fortified, and from here he began to make war on the citizens who had risen in revolt. (Diodorus, 11.67.5–8)

At first the Syracusans took a part of the city named Tyche and making this their base they sent envoys to Gela, Agragas and Selinous, as well as to Himera and the cities of the Sicels situated in the middle of the island requesting aid ... As a result, the Syracusans put their ships in readiness and drew up their army and showed that they were ready and determined both on land and on the sea. Thrasybulus, abandoned by his allies and his hopes based now only on his mercenaries, was in control of just Achradina and the Island, while the Syracusans held the rest of the city. (Diodorus, 11.68.1–3)

After they had liberated their city, the Syracusans allowed the mercenaries to leave Syracuse; and after they had freed the other cities from tyrants or from the presence of their guards, they re-established democracies in these cities. From this time, the city had enjoyed peace and increased very much in prosperity and maintained the democracy for nearly 60 years until the tyranny of Dionysius. (Diodorus, 11.68.6)

(463 BC) Throughout Sicily, as soon as the tyranny at Syracuse had been driven out, all the cities across the island had been liberated, the whole of Sicily increased very much in prosperity. For the Sicilians had peace and the land they farmed was good (Diodorus, 11.72.1)

After they had driven out the tyranny of Thrasybulus, they gathered in an assembly and discussed the establishment of their own democracy; they all agreed in a vote to construct a huge statue dedicated to Zeus the Liberator and to offer sacrifices each year in an 'Eleutheria' and to hold excellent 'Liberation Games' on the same day on which they had liberated their state after driving out the tyrant. (Diodorus, 11.72.2)

They assigned all the public offices to the original citizens; they did not think that the foreigners made citizens by Gelon were worthy to hold this honour – either they considered them not worthy or they distrusted them in case, having lived under a tyranny and having served under his rule, they might be inclined to take power themselves should the opportunity arise. For more than 10,000 foreign mercenaries had been made citizens by Gelon, and of those more than 7,000 remained at this particular time. (Diodorus, 11.72.3)

Those debarred from the honour of the public offices bore the snub angrily and simultaneously rebelled against the Syracusans. They took control of Achradina and the Island in the city, both of which were fortified with well-constructed defences. The Syracusans ... held the rest of the city; and that part facing towards Epipolai they blockaded and made themselves very secure, and at once they easily shut off their opponents from an exit to the countryside and quickly made them short of supplies. (Diodorus, 11.73.1–2)

(461 BC) In Sicily, the Syracusans, in their war against the mercenaries who had rebelled, made assaults on Achradina and the Island and were victorious in a sea battle, but on land they could not drive them from the city on account of the strength of the places they held. (Diodorus, 11.76.1)

At the same time, Ducetius, a leading figure of the Sicels, having a particular issue with the citizens of Catane over a land dispute, launched an attack on them. Similarly, the Syracusans had made an attack on Catane, and so these two joined forces and allotted the land among them and campaigned against the citizens who had been sent there by Hieron. Those in Catane opposed them but came off worse in several engagements; the allies drove them out of the city and they went instead to what is now Aetna, which was then known as Inessa, and those who had originally lived in Catane returned to their city after a long time. (Diodorus, 11.76.3)

After these things had happened, the Geloans, who were the original citizens of Camarina, divided up the land among themselves. Nearly all the cities were eager to terminate the wars and came to a general agreement to make peace with the foreigners among the communities and to receive back exiles and return the cities to their original citizens. However, they gave permission to the mercenaries, who possessed cities belonging to others on account of the previous rulers, to go away and for them all to settle in Messenia. (Diodorus, 11.76.5)

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Appendix 4

The Dating of the Damareteion Coinage

One of the iconic images of Syracuse in the fifth century BC is the portrayal on the obverse of a decadrachm, called the 'damareteion' after Gelon's wife, of the nymph Arethusa, who was a personification of the goddess Artemis. The pictorial reference on the coin is one to the Spring of Arethusa on the Island and the myth associated with this natural phenomenon.¹ The reverse has an equestrian scene consisting of a chariot whose driver or rather the combination of driver and horses is crowned by a flying Nike, while a lion occupies the space in the exergue. The reverse is commonly held to be a portrayal of Gelon's victory in the games at Olympia sometime during his rule (485–478 BC) and hence an indication of Deinomenid propaganda on the coinage. The portrayal of Arethusa, who here is possibly shown emerging from the spring surrounded by the dolphins of Apollo, became the regular obverse on the silver during the Classical Period, although this particular issue has an obviously archaic bust. The later issues, especially those belonging to the rule of Dionysius I, portray a bust of the nymph that achieved a highly artistic level of excellence.

The tetradrachm, long considered a product of the immediate period following the success at Himera and therefore of the last year or two of Gelon's rule, was made possible, it is argued, from the bullion that found its way to Syracuse from Carthage.

When envoys arrived from Carthage and as suppliants begged for mercy from the victor, Gelon in return made peace and demanded only the expenses of the recent war, a total sum of 2,000 talents in silver, and the building of two temples in which a record of the treaty should be deposited. The Carthaginians, treated much more leniently than they had anticipated, agreed to the terms and also promised to deliver a gold crown to Damarete, Gelon's wife. The Carthaginians had requested the intervention of Damarete on their behalf in concluding the peace treaty. In turn, when she received the promised gift, which weighed 100 talents in gold, she ordered the striking of a coin that was afterwards named the "damareteion" and which was worth ten Attic drachms (Diodorus, 11.25.2–3)

However, Mattingly, with cogent evidence based on coin hoard evidence, has suggested that this decadrachm series should be re-dated to the mid-460s and

¹ The spring, which was protected from the nearby sea by being included inside the fortification of the Island, must have belonged to the *temenos* of Artemis, whose temple lay at the centre and summit.

would therefore represent a celebration of the expulsion of Deinomenid rule.² Nevertheless, can a date in the mid-460s be allowed to stand when the events as discussed above in Chapter 3 are taken fully into account? Mattingly's discussion of this celebrated decadrachm series certainly did not mention the instability in Syracuse during this decade.

Perhaps the most puzzling point of Mattingly's suggestion lies in the portrayal of Gelon or Gelon's victory at Olympia, which does not point easily to a celebration of freedom from the former tyranny but seems instead to look back with some sense of pride at the former tyrant's rule. The portrayal of Arethusa is neutral and reflects topographical features of the community. The reverse seems highly politicised, if not provocative. Moreover, a decadrachm was high-denomination currency, when the didrachm or tetradrachm units were easily and commonly minted. Hence there must surely have been a special reason for the minting of this unit of the drachm. High-denomination units usually indicate the payment of some unusual expense, whether economic or military. Hieron would certainly have required such an issue during his war with the Etruscans, whom he defeated near Cumae in 476. Hieron also possessed the resources to coin in high-denomination monetary units and needed these to finance the mercenary troops that he employed to maintain his position in Syracuse and later in Catane. An issue of decadrachms is certainly explicable in the 470s, based on the military and political situation in the city. Nonetheless, if, as seems likely, because of evidence provided by the archaeology, the re-dating of the Sicilian coinage occurred in the fifth century, then some other significant event must be sought to account for this particular issue and for what appears to be a specific reference back to Gelon's rule.

Thrasybulus was expelled during the course of 466, within a year of the death of Hieron. However, Thrasybulus was not expelled by the Syracusan *demos* but by members of the Deinomenid clan who regarded him as a liability and obviously wanted to retain control of the city through what was essentially an oligarchic coup. This was a spectacular failure because there was no single Deinomenid with either the ability or the charisma to obtain sole control; so the civic instability for which the ruling elite was responsible merely grew and the Deinomenids as a whole were also soon excluded from the city. Still, a Deinomenid presence in Syracuse that lasted into 465 and a monetary issue by the founder of the dynasty is fully explicable and fits comfortably with the date that Mattingly (1992) has proposed. In the years between the expulsion of the entire Deinomenid presence and the withdrawal of the mercenaries formerly employed by Hieron in 461/60 and the subsequent creation of a Syracusan democracy, there was an absence of central control in the city. It was divided into warring factions and the Syracusan citizens were certainly a minority section. A

² Mattingly (1992) 1–9.

major coin issue during this period is therefore probably less likely than before or afterwards. Of course, the Geloan contingent in the city, which surpassed in numbers their Syracusan neighbours, could have issued a coin recalling the rule of Gelon. However, the portrayal of Arethusa might suggest that this coin was produced on the Island, which was then occupied by the mercenaries, thus demonstrating the mercenaries' continuing loyalty to the Deinomenids. The pictorial elements on the decadrachm can therefore be considered relevant to each and all the groups in Syracuse between the death of Hieron and a *demos*-controlled government after 460.

To sum up, if the coin is to be regarded as a celebration of the ousting of tyrannical rule by a democracy then this issue has to be re-dated to 460 and somewhat later than the date postulated. Nevertheless, the same coin may have been struck earlier but with a different message or intent. Thus the Geloans might have considered a reference to Gelon advantageous to their cause, the mercenaries might also wish to display a longstanding allegiance to the Deinomenids, but the Syracusans will surely not have wished to portray anything at all connecting them to the dynasty that they had helped expel. Assuming Diodorus is correct in stating that the gold bullion available for this issue was 100 talents then it was clearly a large and important striking of coin but also at a time when Syracuse was embroiled in a prolonged period of *stasis*. Such an immense wealth indicates either central control or control of the depository of such bullion. Gold and silver was generally held in the *cella* or *naos* of a temple; and while Syracuse possessed several important cult centres, the temples of Apollo and Artemis on the Island held an especially senior place in the cultic hierarchy among the Sicilian Greek communities. The obverse of the 'damareteion', with its portrayal of Arethusa, might well indicate an origin for the bullion as being the temple of Artemis. However, Gelon's temple to Athena, which was begun after his victory over Carthage in 480, although it was still unfinished by the end of the 460s, is perhaps a less likely treasury for the city albeit that this complex was also on the summit of the Island adjacent to the *temenos* of Artemis.³ An issue of gold coinage emanating from one of the temples on the Island before 465 suggests one sanctioned by the Deinomenids themselves, but if after that date and down to 460 then by the mercenary troops who garrisoned this stronghold.

The dating of the gold decadrachms at Syracuse in this period involves a somewhat more complex issue than the use of the coin hoard evidence alone, for a rational political situation must also be identified to explain why this strike actually took place. If one assumes that the later date advanced for the issue stands then the *stasis* in Syracuse must also be considered. Depending

³ The temple to Zeus at Polichne certainly contained a substantial treasury, which, it is claimed, was plundered by Dionysius I to fund his war against Carthage in 396, Diod. 14.67.4.

on an interpretation of the pictorial material on the 'damareteion' and the whereabouts of the origin of the bullion needed to strike the coin, the strikers of the issue could have come from various groups active in the city after the fall of Thrasybulus. If the decadrachm was indeed a celebration of the end of tyranny in Syracuse, its date must be moved down to 460 at the earliest, when central control of the treasury of the *polis* was regained by the Syracusans and all other ethnic elements had departed, willingly or not, from the city.

Appendix 5

Extraordinary Trophies: Syracusan Exhibitionism after Victory over the Athenians

In his description of the catastrophe that ended the Athenian expedition against Syracuse in probably early October 413, following the surrender of Nicias at the Assinarus River, Thucydides (7.86.1) concludes with the comment: 'The Syracusans and their allies now brought their forces together into one, took up the spoils and as many of the prisoners as they could, and returned to the city.' Diodorus and Plutarch, of course, wrote much later, but appear to provide further and potentially interesting details about this momentous event:

Since their escape was blocked on all sides, the Athenians were forced to surrender their arms and themselves to the enemy. After this, the Syracusans erected two trophies, nailing to each of them the arms of a general, and returned to the city. (Diod. 13.19.3–4)

The public prisoners were gathered together, and the most beautiful and greatest trees along the river bank were hung with the captured arms and then the victors crowned themselves with laurels, decorated their own horses splendidly while they sheared and cropped the horses of the defeated enemy, and then marched to the city. (Plut. *Nic.* 27.6)

Is there anything worthwhile to be drawn from these apparent differences in detail? Thucydides is the contemporary source and is surely a sound one, while Diodorus and Plutarch are generally considered less reliable when it comes to matters of detail. Is this also the case here? And what is the significance, if any, of victory trophies mentioned by the later writers but completely omitted by Thucydides?

Diodorus' account is plainly a brief summary of events and he treats the entire Athenian retreat from Syracuse, which lasted more than ten days, in just a few lines. At the beginning of his *Life* of Nicias (1.1), Plutarch refers to Thucydides' history, but he also refers to a history written by the Syracusan Philistus, who was roughly a contemporary of Xenophon. Could Philistus, who was a prominent citizen of Syracuse, have been the source consulted by both Diodorus and Plutarch? Plutarch includes a mention of Timaeus in the narrative of Nicias' biography (28.3–4) and this suggests that he also employed this third-

century historian. As noted elsewhere here, the influence of Timaeus cannot be underestimated and his version of events found its way into the works of many key Greco-Roman historians. The elaborate nature of the scene described by Plutarch above perhaps reflects a writer with a 'talent for vivid and dramatic writing', as Timaeus is so credited.¹ It seems possible that Timaeus may have been Plutarch's source of the end of the Athenian invasion of Sicily. Diodorus' account of the erection of trophies also appears to rule out his use of Thucydides.

However, why would Diodorus and Plutarch, who elsewhere show that they knew Thucydides well enough, choose here a source that a modern scholar might well regard as less trustworthy? Timaeus wrote his history probably after 300 BC; and for events in Sicily in the Peloponnesian War, he could also have accessed Philistus. Philistus was almost certainly an eyewitness of events in 413, since he became prominent in public affairs in Syracuse in 405 when he played a significant role in Dionysius' bid for sole power. Thucydides almost certainly relied on the testimony of others for the events in and around Syracuse in 413.² In the case of Diodorus, it would also be logical to suppose that one Sicilian writer might prefer to employ histories composed by fellow Sicilian Greeks, whether Syracusan or from further afield, to using an Athenian as a source for this episode. Both later sources specifically describe the erection of trophies to celebrate and commemorate the victory over the Athenians, while clearly Thucydides mentions none. Why does a discrepancy between the earlier and later accounts exist, and should this alert the reader to partiality by sources originating in the two opposing sides of the conflict?

Trophies (*tropaia*) formed a part of the ritual of the set-piece battle that may date back to Homeric times.³ Thucydides gives many examples of battlefield trophies being set up; and they punctuate post-battle accounts with almost monotonous regularity. The issue seems clear enough: if there was a set-piece battle, the victor set up a trophy close to the spot where the rout or *trope* began. Therefore, Thucydides does not and cannot refer to a Syracusan trophy at the Assinarus River, nor indeed the earlier disaster at the Cacyparis River, because on neither occasion was there a battle. Demosthenes, and soon afterwards Nicias, surrendered their forces while on the march and surrounded by enemy troops. However, there are some divergent details worth noting here, especially with regard to the context of the erection of trophies, which shows that the situation was not quite as well defined as it might appear. In 426, there was no victor's trophy at Plataea because it had been a siege (Thuc. 3.68.3–4). Yet after the

¹ Pearson (1987) 266. Note also Pearson (1987, 90) quoting Josephus, *Contra App.* 1.16, 'Timaeus certainly told "lies" about early times.' But for Timaeus events in 413 were hardly ancient. However, Timaeus was accused of falsifying history, Pol. 12.7.1.

² Pearson (1987) 19; cf. Plut. *Nic.* 19, 54–5.

³ For the Homeric period, see Van Wees (2004) 183; and for a later development, see Pritchett (1974) 2.974.

Spartans had demolished the city, they were able to erect from the debris a highly conspicuous trophy but without naming it as such: 'from the very foundations ... built on to the precinct of Hera a place of rest 200 cubits in extent with rooms all round, above and below, making use for this purpose the roofs and the doors of the Plataeans, the rest of the material in the wall, the brass and the iron, they made couches, which they dedicated to Hera, for whom they also built a stone shrine in length and breadth 100 cubits' (Thuc. 3.68.3). In the campaign around Amphipolis in 422 (Thuc. 5.3.2–6), the Athenians led by Cleon attacked and stormed the city of Torone, defeating the Spartan garrison and capturing its commander Pasitelidas; they 'set up two trophies, one by the harbour, the other by the walls, and made slaves of the women and children of the Toroneans' (Thuc. 5.3.4). Under no stretch of the imagination can this assault by Athenian forces have been recognised as a set-piece battle. At Syracuse, further departures from the norm may be identified:

Next day the Syracusans put up two trophies, one at the approach to Epipolai,⁴ and one at the place where the Boeotians had initially made their stand. (Thuc. 7.45.1)

This followed the disastrous night attack on Epipolai when the Athenians were led by Demosthenes, but it hardly deserves to be described as a battle, especially since it was fought at night, a unique event in the war, and was largely a chaotic and messy series of skirmishes:

Afterwards the Syracusans put up a trophy for the naval action and for the engagement by the wall where they had cut off the hoplites and captured the horses. The Athenians put up a trophy for the fight where the Etruscans had driven the enemy hoplites into the marsh (Thuc. 7.54)

These episodes took place just before the final naval battle in the Great Harbour near the Athenian camp in Lysemeleia, but these were also skirmishes; and neither did they involve large numbers on either side, nor were the sides drawn up for the engagements:

After this long-fought fight in which many men and ships were lost to both sides, the victorious Syracusans and their allies took up the wrecks and the dead, sailed back to the city and set up a trophy. (Thuc. 7.72.1)

⁴ Either directly from the city walls at Achradina, or possibly a reference to Eurialos, the most obvious access to the plateau of Epipolai from the west and the likeliest route for attackers.

The last naval battle at Syracuse could be described for form's sake as a battle, but quite clearly the instructions given to the commanders by Nicias were not for a formal engagement in the manner of Salamis, but for an assault on the barrier that had closed the harbour's entrance and was the sole avenue of escape for the Athenian triremes. This was an attempted breakout; and the Syracusan victory trophy was presumably not set up at any *trope* but in the city itself. In all these examples, trophies were set up, but not after victories in formal battles, suggesting that the word *tropaion* itself had become more associated with any sort of victory rather than one fixed to the narrow definition of a rout. So what happened at the Assinarus River?

Diodorus and Plutarch claim that a final commemoration took place at the termination of a lengthy military campaign. In Plutarch's *Nicias*, there is a single ostentatious monument of multiple trophies employing the landscape, not a man-made construction, and this preceded a victory march. This occurred after Nicias' surrender of the vanguard of the army at the Assinarus, with no detail spared for Demosthenes' surrender of the rearguard at the Cacyparis River. In Diodorus' account, the historian seems to indicate that a trophy was erected for each of these events and that the armour of generals, assuming he means those of Nicias and Demosthenes, comprised the main ornaments on the trophies. To set up a trophy with the captured arms of the enemy leaders would have been of immense significance and a rare event in any battle. In this case, it would have been even more profound since the vanquished were the Athenians and their allies; and, furthermore, the generals, at that point, were still alive.

In conclusion, the question remains as to whether or not Thucydides suppressed the issue of a Syracusan victory trophy in his account. It is possible that Thucydides mentions no trophy because there was none and because the engagement at the Assinarus River was not battle. However, the end of the Athenian expedition was undoubtedly a rout. If Philistus was the ultimate source of Diodorus and Plutarch, he may well have been present on that occasion, but would he have indulged in an invention to magnify the success of his fellow citizens? Could Timaeus later on embellish this scene along the river bank to dramatise the situation further? Balancing the three sources against one another, it might seem judicious to accept Thucydides' silence on the matter and to consider that, at this juncture, the Syracusans did not erect either a single or multiple trophies. Nonetheless, the evidence of Diodorus and Plutarch may be preferable, that there was a trophy or a commemorative monument at the Assinarus River, and the Syracusans chose an exceptional form of construction.⁵

⁵ It is possible that the rural landscape was employed in thanks to particular deities who were an important part of the religious pantheon of Syracuse, namely Demeter and Chorē. A shrine to Chorē lay close to the Athenian camp, at the Ciane Spring near Polichne, and was perhaps only liberated in the final hours of the Athenian siege. The

The surrender of entire armies by Demosthenes and Nicias was unprecedented, and arguably deserved a special celebration if not a unique trophy. Celebrating a military victory by erecting a *tropaion* was not perhaps governed that firmly by any universally accepted rule. Finally, the evidence suggests that Philistus may have recorded the truth; Thucydides may have ignored this out of disdain for exuberant conduct, a lack of information or a desire to reduce the Athenian humiliation; and Timaeus may well have embellished the occasion. As for a solution, however, there is probably no firm answer to the problem.

fixing of Athenian arms to living trees may be an indication of thanks to a deity with close links to the city and to Sicily as a whole.

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Appendix 6

The Chief Sources for the Life and Death of Dion

... to come the third time to the Straits next to Scylla, in order that I might repeat again the length of destructive Charybdis. (Plato, *Ep.* 7.345 D–E)

Who could have believed that Dion would win a victory over Dionysius, who possessed 400 warships, 100,000 infantry, 10,000 cavalry, and supplies of arms, food and money sufficient for these when he landed with two merchant ships? The reason for Dion's success lay primarily in his own noble spirit, courage, and loyal support from those whom he liberated, but still more significant was the contemptible behaviour of the tyrant and the hatred he engendered in his people. (Diodorus, 16.9.2–3)

But Dion, relying not so much on his own forces than on hatred of the tyrant, with just two ships, set out to attack with the greatest spirit an empire of 50 years' standing, defended by 500 warships, 10,000 cavalry and 100,000 infantry. In fact, he so easily overcame his adversary – which seemed to all people an amazing exploit – that on the third day after he had reached Sicily he entered Syracuse. (Nepos, *Dion*, 5.3)

Dionysius (the Younger) was not the worst sort of tyrant, but since his father had been afraid that he would obtain wisdom and mix with high-minded men and so conspire against him and take power, he kept him at home, where, because of a lack of contact with others and being ignorant of public affairs, he made little wagons and lamp stands, wooden chairs and tables. (Plutarch, *Dion*, 9.2)

Dion saw that the tyrant's son was dwarfed and deformed in character and encouraged him to study (Plutarch, *Dion*, 10.1)

Dion ... was at first honoured because of his sister; later, however, giving proof of his wise thoughts, he was well regarded by the tyrant on his own account ... Dion possessed ... a noble character and generosity and he rose higher in virtue ... when Plato came to Sicily. (Plutarch, *Dion*, 4.1–3)

As Plato himself says, he came a third time to the Straits of Scylla [quotes Homer, *Od.* 12.428]. (Plutarch, *Dion*, 18.9)

It was now midsummer and the etesian winds blew strongly over the sea and there was a full moon. Dion made a sacrifice to Apollo ... after the ceremony he held a banquet in the stadium of Zacynthus (Plutarch, *Dion*, 23.3)

After sailing with a light and gentle breeze for twelve days, they reached Cape Pachynus in Sicily on the thirteenth. Dion was afraid to land near his enemy and wished to go further along the coast. At once, a harsh north wind caused a surging sea and drove the ships from Sicily. The sailors were terrified by this storm and to be driven off course, until suddenly they saw that their ships were being forced towards Cercina on the African coast ... Now they were despondent by the calm in which they found themselves when a gentle breeze from the south reached them from the land. Gradually the wind freshened so that they made sail and with prayers to the gods made for Sicily from Africa. They made good time and in five days anchored at Minoa (Plutarch, *Dion*, 25.3)

Aristomache led Dion's son while Arete followed after them in tears and at a loss about how to greet and speak to her husband since she had been married to another man. After Dion had greeted his sister and his small son, Aristomache led Arete to him, saying, 'We were unhappy, Dion, when you were in exile ... is it as uncle or husband she should greet you?' (Plutarch, *Dion*, 51.1)

... Dion remained at home to avoid the crowd and had gone to lie down in an upper room. From among his followers, he [Callippus] chose some young men from Zacynthus who were all bold and very strong and ordered them to go to Dion unarmed so that it might appear that it was a social call. The young men were known and admitted, but when they entered the room they locked the door, fell on Dion and held him down. The noise they made could be heard outside. If Dion's guards were really loyal, they could have broken the lock and saved him since he was still alive and his attackers were calling out for a weapon. When no one came to save him, a Syracusan named Lyco passed a sword through the windows, with which Dion was killed. (Nepos, *Dion*, 9.1)

... Dion was sitting with his friends in a room that had couches for entertainment when some of the plotters stood outside the house, others in the doorway and at the windows. The actual killers were Zacythnians, who entered unarmed without their cloaks. Those outside closed the door and stood on guard, while those inside held Dion down and tried to strangle him or beat him to death. When this failed, they called for a sword, but no one would open the door. After some delay, Lycon of Syracuse handed a short sword through the window to one of the men from Zacynthus [cf. Homer, *Od.* 9.24] and with this they cut Dion's throat as if he were a sacrificial victim. (Plutarch, *Dion*, 57.1)

Those who lived close to where Alcibiades was staying were secretly ordered to kill him. They did not dare to attack openly, but in the night they piled up wood around the house and set it on fire ... When Alcibiades heard the blaze, even though his sword had been stolen, he seized a dagger ... and collected clothes that were available and threw them on the fire and rushed through the flames. When the barbarians saw that he had escaped the fire, they threw missiles at him from a distance, killed him and sent his head to Pharnabazus. (Nepos, *Alcibiades*, 10.4–6)

Those sent to kill him [Alcibiades] did not dare to enter but surrounded the house and set it on fire. When Alcibiades realised what was happening, he collected most of the clothes and bedding in the house and threw it onto the fire. Then he wrapped his cloak around his left arm and drew his sword, rushed out unhurt by the fire, and threw the attackers into confusion. Not one of them stood up to his assault or came close but from a distance shot arrows or threw javelins. (Plutarch, *Alcibiades*, 39.2–3)

And the plotters decided to delay no longer and not to test the opinions of the mass, but the most reckless of them shouted that the Volscians must not listen to the traitor nor allow him to retain his command and play the role of tyrant among them, and so they jumped on him and killed him while no one present came forward to defend him. (Plutarch, *Coriolanus*, 39.4)

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Index

- Acesines (Akesines) River 99 & n. 13
 Achaeans 9, 199
 Achradina 13, 14, 42 n. 54, 43, 45, 59–64,
 72 & n. 31, 78, 121–122, 125,
 128–129 & n. 48, 130 & n. 49,
 131, 133, 138, 152–160 & n. 27,
 176–178, 187 n. 54, 191, 206–207,
 215 n. 4
 Acrae 53, 198, 200
 Acragantini (Acragantines) 35, 42, 47, 49,
 55, 86–87, 89, 154
 Acragas 33, 35, 47–49, 55 n. 78, 60, 66–67 &
 n. 20, 77 n. 35–36, 86–89, 92,
 108–109, 118, 138, 140, 142
 n. 75, 154, 156 & n. 19, 158–160,
 161 n. 28, 164, 192–193, 195, 198,
 200–202, 206
 Acrocorinth 15
 Actaeon 10, 17, 199
 Adria 164 & n. 5, 195
 Adriatic Sea 8 n. 20, 12, 174–175
 Aegean Sea 26, 109, 110 n. 6, 112 n. 13,
 125, 127 n. 45, 151, 173–174
 Aegina 29 n. 28
 Aelian 167 n. 16
 Aeschylus 54, 192–193, 201 n. 5, 203
 Aetna (Catane) 42 n. 54, 53–54, 58–59,
 65 & n. 16, 68 & n. 22, 70 & n. 27,
 73–74, 79–80 & n. 3, 86, 192;
 see also Catane
 Aetna (Inessa) 70 n. 27, 73, 80 & n. 3, 86,
 161, 192
 Africa 29 n. 28, 42 & n. 51, 112, 174, 195,
 220
 Agamemnon 28 & n. 27
 Agathocles 42 n. 51, 45 n. 62, 104 n. 22
 Agyrium 42 n. 54, 162
 Alcibiades 3, 84 n. 10, 102, 107 n. 3,
 112–113, 116, 118–120, 124, 127,
 183 & n. 46, 184, 221
 Alexander I of Macedonia 31
 Alexander III (the Great) 164
 Alpheus River 4 n. 14
 Anapus River 128, 129 n. 48, 130–131, 141
 Anaxilas 20, 21 n. 8, 31 n. 33, 33 & n. 38,
 47, 48 n. 66, 51 & n. 72, 52, 56,
 81 n. 4, 95
 Andromachus 188 n. 57
 Antiochus of Syracuse 3 & n. 10, 5 & n. 16,
 6–7, 16, 23 n. 16, 33 n. 39, 36 n. 42,
 44, 46, 61, 66 n. 18, 70 n. 29, 84,
 103 n. 21, 105, 110, 147, 163, 193,
 199, 201 & n. 3
 Antiphimus 22 n. 11
 Apamea 5 n. 15
 Apelles 85
 Apollo 1 & n. 1, 2 n. 4, 7 & n. 19, 9, 42
 n. 54, 199, 209, 220; Temple of
 Apollo at Delphi 4, 43, 91 &
 n. 25; Shrine of Apollo Archegetes
 at Naxos 16 & n. 19 n. 3, 38, 195,
 198; Temple of Apollo (*Apollonion*)
 on the Island 14, 16, 19, 191, 211;
 Temple of Apollo at Corinth 15,
 Temple of Apollo at Selinous 148,
 temenos of Apollo at Syracuse 42
 n. 54, 125, 129 & n. 48, 157
 Apollocrates 167 & n. 17, 168, 170, 177 &
 n. 32, 180–181, 195
 Archias (founder of Syracuse) 1, 4, 6–8,
 10–15 & n. 37, 16–18 & n. 39, 19
 n. 1, 21, 71, 191, 198–199
 Archias (citizen of Camarina) 99
 Archilochus 10 n. 25
 Archonides 178 n. 33
 Archonides of Herbita 88 n. 22
 Arete 167 n. 15, 168, 176, 182, 196, 220
 Arethusa 209–211; Fountain of Arethusa
 4 & n. 14
 Argos 7

- Aristomache 166–167 & n. 15, 170–171, 182, 195–196, 220
 Aristomenes of Messene 10 & n. 27, 11
 Ariston 138
 Aristophanes *Knights* 112 n. 12
 Aristotle *Politics* 59 & n. 5–6, 60–61, 69
 Arrian *de Tactica* 5 n. 15
 Artemis 209; Temple of Artemis at Syracuse 192, 209 n. 1, 211
 Artemisium 41
 Asia Minor 34, 41, 194
 Assinaros River (Tellaro) 144 & n. 84
 Athena 83 & n. 7; Temple of Athena at Syracuse 42 n. 54
 Athenaeus *Deipnosophistae* 46 n. 63; 56, 71 n. 30, 167 n. 16, 188
 Athenagoras 115–117, 153, 154 n. 14, 194
 Athens 3 n. 10, 15 n. 37, 16, 26, 83 & n. 7, 84–85, 93–94, 99, 101–102, 107 n. 3, 108–109, 111 n. 10, 112 n. 13, 113–114, 116, 117 n. 20, 118–120, 123, 125–127, 132, 135, 137, 144, 147 n. 1, 150, 154 n. 16, 155, 163, 172, 184, 192–194, 201 n. 5, 203
 Attica 29, 38, 94–95, 109, 113, 115, 124 n. 38, 127

 Bacchiadae 6, 8, 10, 15 & n. 37, 17–18, 21
 Bacchylides 54, 201–202 & n. 9
 Boedromion 174
 Bolcon 87
 Bricinniae 108
 Bruttii 50, 109
 Bruzzano Zeffiri 8 & n. 22
 Byrgi 13 & n. 33
 Byzantine 10 n. 28, 24, 57

 Cacyparis River 48 n. 65, 144 & n. 84, 214, 216
 Cadmus (son of Scythes) 31 & n. 33–35, 34
 Caesar 5 n. 15
 Caicinus River 96
 Calabria 8, 109, 135 n. 62
 Cale Acte (Cephaloedium/Caronia) 20, 88 n. 21

 Callipolis 21 n. 10
 Callippus 181 & n. 40, 182 & n. 43, 183, 186–187 & n. 53, 196, 220
 Camarina 22, 24–25, 53, 55, 67–68 & n. 24, 69, 74–77, 93 & n. 3, 99–101 & n. 17, 103, 108–109, 118–119, 121 n. 28, 122 n. 30, 125–126 & n. 44, 137–138 & n. 64, 142, 154 n. 13, 159–160 & n. 26, 191, 194, 198, 200, 205, 207
 Campania 49, 68, 76–77, 84, 87 n. 18, 161 n. 29, 180
 Cape Malea 31 n. 36
 Cape Pelorus (see also Pelorias) 98
 Cape Sounion 127
 Carthage 27–28, 32–36 & n. 43, 38 n. 46, 40, 42, 70 n. 27, 112 & n. 12, 114, 127, 150, 154 n. 12, 160, 169, 195, 209, 211 & n. 3
 Carthaginians 26–27, 32–33, 35–36 & n. 43, 37–38, 40–42, 45 & n. 62, 50, 55, 62, 82, 114, 127, 148, 150–156 & n. 19, 159 & n. 25, 161, 164, 174–175, 195, 209
 Casmenae (Bucherì) 21, 53, 75, 198, 200
 Cassius Dio, see Dio (Cassius)
 Catane 17, 46, 52–54, 56, 58–59, 62, 63 n. 12–13, 65 & n. 16, 67–70 & n. 27, 71, 73 & n. 33, 74–80 & n. 3, 81–82, 86, 93 n. 3, 99–100, 108–109, 118 & n. 22, 119–121 & n. 28, 122 & n. 29, 123, 125–126, 128, 131, 135 n. 62, 138, 142, 144, 186, 191–192, 197–198, 200, 205–207, 210
 Caulonia 137
 Cercina 174, 220
 Chalcidians 1, 198
 Charocades 85 n. 13, 95 & n. 5, 96, 193
 Chersicrates 8, 199
 Chians 126
 Chorē (see Persephone)
Chorē 8, 21, 53, 65, 74, 117
 Chromius 202 & n. 8
 Cicero 9 n. 24, 189

- Cicones 14
 Cimbri and Teutones 32 n. 37
 Cleander (brother of Hippocrates) 21 & n. 9, 24–25, 191
 Cleander (son of Hippocrates) 21, 24
 Cleon 109, 116, 215
 Constans II xvii
 Corax 201
 Corcyrā 8 & n. 20, 14, 16, 93 n. 1, 109–110 & n. 8, 113, 115, 116 n. 19, 193, 197, 199–200
 Corcyraeans 8 n. 20, 31 n. 36
 Corinth 4, 6–7 & n. 18, 8 n. 20, 10, 12, 14–15, 17–18, 21–22, 33, 46, 71, 80 n. 2, 88–89, 93 n. 1, 114, 117 n. 22, 124, 127, 135, 172–173, 180–181 & n. 40, 187 & n. 55, 188 n. 57, 193, 196, 198–200
 Corinthian 1, 8 & n. 20, 12, 88–89, 127, 132, 135, 138, 181, 198–199
 Corinthian Gulf 12
 Coriolanus 183 & n. 46, 221
 Corsica (Cyrnus) 85 & n. 14
 Cos 31 n. 33
 Croesus 10 n. 26
 Cronion 167 n. 18
 Croton 4–7 & n. 17, 8–10 & n. 28, 11 & n. 31, 12, 16–17, 47, 49, 191, 199–201
 Crotoniate 11, 28, 47 n. 64
 Cumae 49–50 & n. 70, 191, 210
 Cumaeans 49–50
 Cyaxares 11 n. 29
 Cyclopes 14
Cyllirii 21, 75
 Cypselus 6, 46, 198
 Cyzicus 151, 194

 Dalmatia 8 n. 20
 Damarete 42, 44 n. 58, 45, 56, 209
Damareteion 42 n. 53, 209–212
 Daphnaeus 154, 158
 Darius 20 n. 7, 114
 Dascon 38 n. 47, 62, 72, 117 n. 22, 123 & n. 36, 125 n. 41, 194

 Decadrachm 42, 209–212
 Decelea 127
 Deinomenes (father of Gelon & Hieron) 19, 50 n. 70, 55–56, 58, 66
 Deinomenes (son of Gelon) 45 n. 60, 56, 59
 Deinomenes (son of Hieron) 45 n. 60, 56, 59 n. 5–6, 73 n. 33, 80 n. 3, 86 n. 16, 202 n. 8
 Deinomenes (conspirator against Hieronymus) 45 n. 60
 Deinomenids 19–56
 Deioeces 10–11 & n. 29
 Delphi 4, 6–7, 9, 11, 31, 33–34, 43 & n. 55, 50, 59 n. 6, 91 & n. 25, 165 n. 7, 192, 199, 203
 Delphic see Pythian
 Demarchus 158 & n. 22
 Demeter 23, 42 & n. 54, 182 & n. 43, 216
 Democracy 58, 60, 63–64, 75, 78, 79–92, 95, 104–105, 116–117, 149–150, 152–153, 179–181, 183–184, 186, 188, 192, 206, 210–211
 Demographics (Demography) 65, 67–69, 74, 76
Demos 22 & n. 13, 25, 49, 57, 66, 69–71, 75, 78–79, 82–83, 86, 89, 93, 97, 108, 110, 112, 127, 139, 157, 172, 181, 194, 205, 210–211
 Demosthenes 16, 139 & n. 69, 140–141, 144, 148–149 & n. 3, 194, 214–217
 Demoteles 100 & n. 14
Deus ex machina 139
 Dexippus 157
 Dio (Cassius) 24, 70 n. 29
 Diocles 147–149 & n. 4, 150–152 & n. 11, 153, 155, 158 n. 22, 194–195
 Diodorus Siculus *Bibliotheca* (Library of History) *passim*
 Diomilus 128
 Dion 30 n. 30, 59 n. 5, 104 n. 22, 150 n. 6, 163–188, 189, 195, 219–221
 Dionysius I 1 n. 1, 6, 13, 30 & n. 30, 60, 72 n. 31, 79, 81 n. 4, 85 & n. 14, 104 n. 22, 135 n. 62, 147–162,

- 163–188, 189, 195–196, 201 & n. 4, 206, 209, 211 n. 3, 214
 Dionysius II 30 n. 30, 59 n. 5, 60 n. 7, 62, 76, 87 n. 18, 164–188, 195–196, 219
 Dionysius (of Halicarnassus) *Roman Antiquities* (AR) 24, 70 n. 29, 201 n. 3
 Dorians 6, 8, 12 & n. 32, 14, 16, 22, 52, 68–69, 71, 93 n. 3, 102, 104, 107, 117 n. 22, 124 n. 38, 125, 134
 Doricus 26–28
 Doris 158 n. 21, 166–168, 170, 195
Douloi 21
 Draco 149
 Ducetius 65, 73–75, 79–82, 86–91, 95, 103, 105, 192–193, 207
- Egypt 112 & n. 11
 Eileithia (temple at Pyrgi) 85 n. 14
 Eirene 42 n. 52
 Elba (Athaleia) 85
 Elea (Velia) 49 n. 69
 Eleusinian Mysteries 182 n. 43
 Elorus 22, 45, 62, 72, 74, 119 n. 25, 122–123, 144, 191
 Engyum 187 n. 53
 Enna 39, 82 n. 5, 86
 Entella 68 n. 22, 161 n. 29
 Entimus 22 n. 11
 Epaminondas 164, 173 n. 24
 Ephorus 2 n. 4, 23 n. 16, 33 n. 39, 44, 46, 57 n. 1, 60, 70 n. 29, 79, 93–94, 103 n. 21, 174
Epibatai 61, 85
 Epicharmus 1 n. 2, 55 & n. 77
 Epidauros 7
 Epipolai 39, 43 n. 56, 62, 64, 72 n. 31, 118, 122, 124, 128–129 & n. 48, 130–134, 139–140 & n. 71, 144, 149 n. 4, 161, 163, 178, 186, 194, 207, 215
 Epirus 164 & n. 5, 195
 Eryx 27 & n. 24
 Etna (Mount) 69 n. 26, 99 n. 13
- Etruscans 47, 49, 54, 77–78, 84–85 & n. 12, 91 n. 25, 161 n. 29, 192–193, 210, 215
 Euboea (in Greece) 1 n. 2, 125, 198
 Euboea (in Sicily) 2 n. 5, 25, 55, 68–69, 71, 74–76, 191, 205
 Euboicans 25
 Euclides 21, 24
 Eucles 131
 Eunapius 30 n. 32
 Euphemus 125–126
 Euripides (*Hippolyta*) 43
 Eurybiades 29
 Eurymedon 16, 85 & n. 13, 94, 96, 98, 103, 135 n. 60, 139, 142, 194
 Eusebius 201 n. 3
 Euthydemus 135 n. 60, 139 n. 70
- Gela 2 n. 8, 20–21 & n. 8, 22 & n. 11–12, 23 & n. 14–15, 24 & n. 18, 25, 28, 43, 45–47, 49, 54 n. 74, 55, 58–60, 64, 66–67 & n. 20, 68–69, 74, 76–77, 89, 101–102 & n. 19, 103, 107–109, 118, 122 n. 30, 132, 137–138 & n. 64, 142 & n. 75, 152, 154 & n. 13, 155 & n. 18, 156 & n. 19, 157–160, 191, 193, 195, 198, 200–201 & n. 5, 203, 205–206
 Geloans 20, 22 & n. 12–13, 24 n. 18, 44, 52, 64, 66–68 & n. 24, 69, 74–77 & n. 35, 101, 103, 108, 160, 198, 205, 207, 211
 Gelon 2 & n. 7, 13, 19, 21–23 & n. 14, 16, 2424 & n. 18, 25–27 & n. 26, 28–36 & n. 42, 37–45 & n. 62, 46, 49–50, 53–54 & n. 75, 55–56, 58–59, 61, 63, 66–69, 71, 75, 77–79, 90, 104 n. 22, 156, 183, 189, 191–192, 198, 201, 203, 205, 207, 209–211; acclaimed *euergetes*, *soter*, *basileus* 42
Geomoroi 21–22, 75
 Gongylus 132 & n. 55
 Gorgias 93

- Great Harbour (of Syracuse) 38 n. 47, 39, 62, 118–120 & n. 28, 129 n. 48, 130–131, 133 n. 57, 134, 136–139 & n. 70, 142–144, 147, 157, 160, 163, 177, 186, 194, 215
- Gulf of Gabes 174
- Gylippus (son of Cleandridas) 127, 131 & n. 53, 132 & n. 54, 133 & n. 56, 134–135 & n. 61, 136, 138, 140, 142–143, 147–148 & n. 2, 152
- Hagesias 68 n. 23
- Hamilcar 32–33 & n. 38, 40, 35–36 & n. 42–43, 37, 39, 40, 42–43, 192, 195
- Hannibal (son of Hamilcar) 36 n. 43, 151 n. 10, 195
- Hecataeus 4
- Hecatompodon 178
- Hekatombaion 174
- Helen 28 n. 27
- Hellanicus 178 n. 33
- Hellenic League 26–27, 29, 31 & n. 36, 41, 52 n. 73
- Hellespont 26 & n. 23, 31, 33 n. 40, 34, 38, 40, 125
- Hellespontine Phrygia 151
- Heloris 161
- Heraclea (Siris) 52
- Heraclea Minoa 172, 174 & n. 26, 175 & n. 27, 195
- Heracleides 117 n. 22, 124
- Heracles (Hercules) 6; Temple of at Acragas 48, Temple at Syracuse 144, 198
- Heraclidae 1, 6, 8, 198–199
- Heraclides 131
- Heraclides (rival of Dion) 173, 176 & n. 30, 177, 179 & n. 36, 180–181, 195
- Herbessus 161 & n. 28
- Herbita 88 n. 22
- Hermias of Methymna 165 n. 8
- Hermocrates (son of Hermon) 3 n. 10, 101–102 & n. 19, 103 & n. 20–21, 104 & n. 22, 105, 107, 110 n. 6, 113 n. 15, 114–117 & n. 22, 119, 123–124 & n. 37–38, 125, 128, 131, 135–136, 140, 144, 147–148 & n. 2, 149 & n. 3, 150 & n. 6, 151 & n. 9–10, 152 & n. 11, 153–154 & n. 14, 158, 166, 183, 193–195
- Hermocritus 158 n. 21, 170
- Hermocritus (son of Dionysius I) 166, 170
- Herodotus 2 & n. 5, 3 & n. 11, 10–11 & n. 29, 20–23 7 n. 14, 24–27 & n. 26, 28–29 & n. 28, 30, 31 n. 33, 36, 32–33 & n. 38–40, 34, 38, 40–41, 43 n. 57, 46, 54, 61, 66, 193, 201–202, 205
- Heroon* 15, 45 n. 62
- Hexapylon 178
- Hicetas 167 n. 15, 185 n. 51, 186–187 & n. 54, 196
- Hieron 6, 23 n. 14, 30, 43 n. 55, 45 & n. 60, 46–48 & n. 65, 49–50 & n. 70, 51–54 & n. 74–75, 55–56, 58 & n. 2–4, 59 & n. 5–6, 62, 63 n. 11, 65–68 & n. 23, 69–70 & n. 27, 73 & n. 33, 74–75, 77–80 & n. 3, 82, 84, 86, 91 n. 25, 104 n. 22, 164, 189, 191–192, 201–202, 205–207, 210–211
- Hieron II 6, 63 n. 11, 104 n. 22
- Hieronymus 45 n. 60, 70 n. 28
- Himera 19, 28, 32–36, 38 & n. 46, 39–44, 46–47, 50, 52 n. 73, 55, 58, 60, 66, 67 n. 20, 69 n. 26, 70 n. 27, 77 n. 36, 88 n. 21, 89, 96, 120, 132 & n. 54, 142, 150 & n. 7, 151 & n. 10, 152, 154, 159, 191–193, 195, 206, 209
- Himeraeans 35–36, 39, 47, 70 n. 27, 132
- Himera River 89, 193
- Himilcar 160
- Himilcon 195
- Hipparchus 15 n. 37
- Hipparinus (father of Aristomache) 166 n. 14, 170
- Hipparinus (son of Dionysius I) 166, 168, 170–171, 187 & n. 54, 188, 196

- Hipparinus (son of Dion) 170, 181 n. 42, 182, 195
Hippeis 71 & n. 30, 78, 127, 178 n. 33
 Hippias 15 n. 37
 Hippocrates 20 & n. 7, 21 & n. 8, 22 & n. 13, 23 & n. 14, 24–25, 66, 75, 191, 205
 Hipponium 46, 49, 85, 108–109
 Homer *Iliad* 14; *Odyssey* 13–14
 Hoplite 27, 38 n. 47, 78, 85, 94, 100 n. 16, 109, 113 n. 14, 122, 128–129, 133–134, 135 n. 62, 137, 139 n. 68, 142, 160 n. 26, 178, 215
 Horace 158 n. 23
Hubris 28, 32, 41, 138 n. 66, 145, 165
 Hybla Geleatis 120
 Hybla Mountains 21, 161
 Hyblon 2
 Hyccara 120, 121 n. 28, 183 n. 46, 194
 Hyperbolus 83 n. 8, 84 & n. 10, 112 n. 12
- Iapygian Peninsula 16, 109, 113–114
 Iapygii 50, 52
 Iberia (Iberians) 76, 87
 Ietas 132
 Illyria 8 n. 20
 Inessa see Aetna (Inessa)
 Inyx 20 & n. 7
 Ionia 46, 53, 77, 125
 Ionian 12 n. 32, 16, 20 & n. 4, 21 n. 8–9, 26, 53, 68, 71, 93 & n. 3, 95, 100, 102, 107, 124 n. 38, 125, 134, 138
 Ionian Sea 4, 12, 16, 68, 109, 113, 115, 117, 123, 132, 174
 Ischia 49, 84–85, 192
 Island (Ortygia) 2, 4 & n. 14, 8 n. 20, 12–15, 19 & n. 1, 39, 42 n. 54, 54, 59–64, 72, 78, 118, 121, 123, 136, 157, 160–162, 167 & n. 17, 176–181, 185–187 & n. 54, 191–192, 195–196, 198–199, 206–207, 209 & n. 1, 211
 Isola San Pantaleo 13
 Isthmia (Isthmian) 11, 202
 Isthmus of Corinth 7, 33
 Ithaca 14
- John Tzetzes 24, 70 n. 29
 Junius Brutus, L. 166
- Kingship 6, 11, 198
 Klenia 7 n. 19
Koine eirene 107 n. 2
- Labdalum 128–129, 133, 137
 Laches 85 n. 13, 95 n. 5, 96, 98, 111
 Lade 20 & n. 4, 25
 Lamachus 112, 118 & n. 23, 120, 125, 130, 131 n. 52
 Lamis 12
 Laos 49
 Latium 49
Lenaea 165 & n. 7
 Leon 43 n. 56, 194
 Leontini 2, 17, 21 n. 10, 46, 52–53, 69 & n. 26, 70 & n. 28, 73–75, 77, 81–82 & n. 5, 93–95, 99–100 & n. 15, 103–104, 107 & n. 1, 108, 111 & n. 10, 114, 118, 121, 122 n. 29, 125–126, 138, 144 n. 83, 156, 160, 176–178 & n. 33, 187 & n. 54, 191–194, 197–198, 200
 Leptines (brother of Dionysius I) 164, 167 & n. 18, 170
 Leptines (son of Leptines) 187 & n. 53
 Liburnians 8 n. 20
 Lilybaeum (Marsala) 5, 36 n. 43, 51 n. 71, 82 & n. 6, 193, 205
 Lindos 22 n. 11
 Lipara 94, 96, 193
 Livy 2 n. 7, 45 n. 60, 70 n. 28
 Locri (Locrians; *Locri Epizephyrii*) 8 & n. 21–23, 9, 11 & n. 31, 12, 58, 70, 94, 96 & n. 7, 97–100, 104, 108, & n. 5, 109, 124, 132, 136 n. 62, 163, 166–167 & n. 16, 170, 177–180, 185, 187, 192–193, 195
 Lucretia 166 & n. 11
 Lyco 182, 220
 Lysimeleia 1 n. 1, 43 n. 56, 129 n. 48, 130–131, 137, 139–141, 144

- Mactorians 23 n. 15
 Magna Graecia 5 & n. 16, 6, 9, 16–17, 46, 50, 52, 66 n. 18, 94, 100, 109, 114, 194, 201 & n. 3, 202 n. 7
 Marathon 22 n. 13, 124 n. 38, 127 n. 45
 Mardonius 41
 Mattingly 209–210
 Mazarus River 82
 Media (Median) 10–11 & n. 29
 Medma 108–109
 Megacles 173, 176 n. 28
 Megara in Greece 2, 49 n. 68, 172
 Megara Hyblaea (Megarians) 1 n. 2, 2 & n. 4–7, 4, 12 & n. 32, 17, 25, 36 n. 43, 53, 55, 68–69, 71, 74–77 & n. 36, 95, 118, 121, 125, 127–128, 139, 191, 193, 197–200, 205
 Megarian Plain 45, 129 n. 48, 134
 Menaenum (Menae/Mineo) 82 & n. 5, 86, 192
 Menander 135 n. 60, 139
 Menelaus 28 n. 27
 Mercenaries 27 n. 26, 35, 40 & n. 48, 44, 47–48, 52–53, 79–80, 82, 86–87, 108 & n. 5, 109, 131, 151–152, 154, 155–156, 160–162 & n. 31, 173, 175–178 & n. 33, 179, 182, 187, 192, 206–207; role of mercenaries in Syracuse in 460s 59–63 & n. 12–13, 64–78; coinage issues by mercenaries 210–211
 Messene (Zancle/Messina) 1 n. 2, 12, 17, 20, 21 n. 8, 31 n. 33, 33 n. 38, 46, 51 & n. 71, 52, 58 n. 2, 66–68 & n. 22, 70, 74, 77, 93 n. 3, 95–100, 101 n. 17, 108 & n. 5, 109, 118, 124, 151, 179, 186–187, 193
 Messenians 10, 95–98 & n. 11, 99–100 & n. 14–15, 118, 124
 Metageitnion 174
 Metapontum 52
 Methymnae 126
 Micynthus 51 & n. 72
 Milesians 20 n. 5
 Miletus 11
 Mina 65, 78
 Morgantina (Aidone) 82 & n. 5, 103, 193
 Motya 13 & n. 33, 27 n. 25, 82 n. 6, 151, 163 n. 1, 195
 Motyum 86–87
 Mount Etna 69 n. 26, 99 n. 13
 Mycenae 7 & n. 18, 28 n. 27
 Mylae 94–96 & n. 7, 193
 Myscellus 4, 9, 11, 17, 199
 Naxos 1 & n. 1–2, 2 & n. 4, 4, 12, 16 & n. 38, 17, 19 n. 3, 21 n. 10, 52–53, 69–71, 73 n. 32, 74–77, 81 n. 4, 99 & n. 13, 100, 118, 121 n. 28, 124 & n. 39, 125–126, 191–192, 197–200, 205
 Neapolis (suburb of Syracuse) 42 n. 54, 72 n. 31, 130 n. 49, 157
 Neapolis (Licata) 179–180
 Neapolis in Campania 49 n. 69, 177, 180
 Nemean 202
 Nemesis 42 n. 52
 Nepos 169, 170–173, 175, 179 n. 36, 181 & n. 40, 182–184, 219–221
 Nero 165 n. 10
 Nicias 16, 38 n. 47, 84 n. 10, 107 n. 3, 112 & n. 13, 113 & n. 14–15, 116, 118 & n. 23, 120, 122, 123 n. 33, 124–125, 130–135 & n. 60, 137–139 & n. 67, 69–70, 140–144, 148 & n. 2, 149 & n. 3, 183 n. 46, 186, 194, 213–214, 216–217
 Nicolaus 147
 Nike 209
 Nisaeus 166, 168, 170–171, 187 & n. 54, 196
 Nomae 87
Nomothetai 149 n. 4
 Noto 45 n. 62
 Numa Pompilius 10 & n. 28, 11, 17
 Nypsus 87 n. 18, 167 n. 17, 177–180
 Odysseus 14, 197
Oikist 6, 15 & n. 37, 19 n. 1, 53, 70 n. 27, 71
 Olympia 11, 50, 192, 201, 209–210
 Olympicion 19, 72, 191
 Orontes (River) 5 n. 15

- Oropus 127
 Ortygia (see Island)
 Ostracism (*ostrakismos*) 83 & n. 7–8, 84 & n. 9
- Pachynus 5, 205, 220
 Palicē (Roccicella) 86, 90–91, 193
 Panhellenic Games 110 n. 7, 165 n. 7, 172, 201
 Panormus 27 n. 25, 34–35, 37–38 & n. 46, 40, 43, 151, 191
 Pantares 24
Paralus 107 n. 3
 Paralus (see also Synalus) 174
 Paris 28 n. 27
 Pausanias 7 & n. 18–19, 80 n. 3
 Pausanias (general at Plataea) 41
 Peloponnese 6–7, 10, 12, 14, 29 n. 28, 31 & n. 36, 43, 51–52, 67–68, 70, 74, 94–95, 98, 100 & n. 14, 112 & n. 13, 115, 117–118 n. 22, 120 n. 26, 124–125, 127, 131, 138, 150 & n. 8, 151, 157, 173, 175, 177, 194, 205
 Peloponnesian League 26, 125 n. 43
 Pelorias ('The Straits') 5
 Pentapylon 176 & n. 29
Pentekonteliton 42
 Pericles 112, 116, 164, 184
Periplous 138
 Persephone (Chorē) 23, 42, 182 & n. 43, 216 n. 5
 Persia 11 n. 29, 20 & n. 7, 27, 31 n. 33, 114
 Persians 21 n. 9, 26, 27, 31 & n. 34, 36, 32, 34, 36 n. 42, 40–41, 125, 127, 151
 Persian Wars 10, 52 n. 73, 57
 Petalism (*petalismos*) 83 & n. 7, 84, 105, 193
 Phaeacia 14
 Phaeax (son of Eristratus) 107 & n. 3, 108–109, 194
 Phalaris 55 n. 78
 Pharax 179
 Pharnabazus 151, 221
 Phayllus 85
- Philip II 164, 166 n. 12
 Philippi 158 n. 23, 181 n. 41
 Philistus 33 n. 39, 44, 46, 103 n. 21, 116, 147, 148 n. 2, 149 n. 3, 154 & n. 15, 157, 161 & n. 30, 163–164 & n. 4–5, 170, 176, 195, 201 & n. 4, 213–214, 216–217
 Philoxenus 165 & n. 9, 195
 Phoebia (Rhegium) 187 n. 52
 Phraortes 11 n. 29
 Pindar 4 & 14, 43 n. 55, 44 n. 58, 54, 55 n. 78, 56, 58 n. 3, 59 n. 6, 68 n. 23–24, 73 n. 33, 80 n. 3, 165 n. 7, 192, 201–202 & n. 7; *Nemean Ode* 1 & 2 58 n. 4, 202; *Olympian Ode* 4 68 n. 24; *Olympian Ode* 6 68 n. 23, 202; *Pythian Ode* 1 44 n. 58, 55 n. 78, 56 n. a, 59 n. 6, 202; *Pythian Ode* 2 202
 Piraeus 113, 127, 172
 Pisistratus 10 n. 26, 156
 Pithecusae 17
 Plataea (battle) 31 n. 35, 4152 n. 73, 214
 Plato 165 & n. 9, 169–170, 172–173, 183–184 & n. 48, 195; *Letters* 169 & n. 20, 219; *Critias* & *Timaeus* 150 n. 6
 Plemmyrion 119 n. 25, 123, 134 & n. 59, 136–137
Plethron 130 n. 50
 Pliny the Elder *Natural History* 99 n. 13
 Plutarch 15 n. 37, 18 n. 39, 84 n. 10, 147, 213–216; *Life of Alcibiades* 183 n. 46, 221; *Life of Nicias* 148 n. 2, 149 n. 3; *Life of Dion* 155 n. 17, 164 n. 5, 166 n. 11, 168 & n. 19, 169–174 & n. 26, 176 n. 30, 178 & n. 33, 179 & n. 36, 180–181 & n. 38, 41–42, 182 & n. 43, 183–184 & n. 48, 186–187, 219–220; *Life of Timoleon* 188; *Life of Coriolanus* 221
 Polemarch 124 n. 38
 Polichne 1 n. 2, 15, 19, 22 n. 13, 45 n. 62, 64, 72, 122–123, 125 & n. 41, 130,

- 134, 136, 138, 191, 211 n. 3,
216 n. 5
- Polis* 14, 23, 25, 27, 36 n. 43, 41, 51, 53, 57,
63–65, 67, 69, 72, 74, 80 n. 1, 104,
126, 155, 162 n. 31, 181, 187, 212
- Polybius* 2 n. 7, 70 n. 28, 103 n. 21,
104 n. 22
- Polyperchon* 187
- Polyxenus* 158, 161, 170
- Polyzelus* 43 n. 55, 45 n. 60, 47 & n. 64,
48 & n. 65, 49, 56, 58 n. 4
- Poseidon* 36, 43
- Posidona* 49
- Posidonius* 5 & n. 15–16, 6
- Punic* 27 n. 24–25, 28, 34–36 & n. 42–43,
37–38, 40, 42, 82 n. 6, 112, 151,
174
- Pylos* 31 n. 36, 98, 100 & n. 16
- Pythagoras* 10 n. 28
- Pythia* 11
- Pythian* (Delphic) Games 165, 191, 192
- Pythodorus* 85 & n. 13, 96–97, 103
- Pythogenes* 20
- Remus* 10
- Rhea Silvia* 18
- Rhégians* 21, 50, 52, 94–95
- Rhégium* 12, 16–17, 20, 31 n. 33, 33, 46,
50–51 & n. 71, 52, 58 n. 2, 66,
70, 74, 81 n. 4, 93–98 & n. 10,
100–101 & n. 17, 109, 117–119,
163, 176, 187, 191, 193–194, 196
- Rhodes* 5 n. 15, 22 & n. 11, 83 n. 7
- Rome* 5 n. 15, 9–10 & n. 28, 11, 16–18 &
n. 39, 49, 85 n. 12, 158 n. 23, 183
- Romulus* 10–11, 17
- Salaminia* 107 n. 3, 120 & n. 26
- Salamis* (battle) 28, 29 n. 28, 31 n. 36,
32–34, 38–41, 43, 52 n. 73, 216
- Samians* 20 & n. 5, 21 n. 8
- Samos* 25, 83 n. 8
- Scidrus* 49
- Scythes* 20 & n. 7, 25, 31 & n. 33
- Second Punic War* 2 n. 7, 45 n. 60
- Segesta* 27 n. 24–25, 74, 82 & n. 6, 111 &
n. 10, 114–115, 118, 120, 132, 150,
171 n. 22, 193–194
- Segestacans* 111 & n. 10, 118, 120 n. 27,
126, 150
- Selinous* 36 & n. 43, 60, 69 n. 26, 74, 77 n.
36, 111, 118, 132, 142, 148, 150 &
n. 7, 151–154, 195, 198–200, 206
- Selinuntines* 36, 150–151
- Sextus Tarquinius* 166 n. 11
- Sicani* (Sicanian) 88 n. 22, 118
- Sicanus* 117 n. 22, 124, 140 n. 72, 142 n. 75
- Sicels* 1, 21, 27, 65, 73–74, 77, 80–82,
86–88, 90–91 & n. 24, 92, 95, 100,
108, 114, 120, 126, 137, 180, 192,
198, 206–207
- Siciliots* 102
- Sicily* 1 & n. 2, 2 & n. 4, 8, 3 n. 10, 5–7, 8
n. 20, 9, 12, 14, 16–17, 19, 20 n. 5,
21–24, 26 & n. 21, 27, 30 & n. 29,
31 n. 33, 32–33 & n. 39, 34–35, 36
n. 43, 38 n. 46, 40–42, 45–46, 49,
51 n. 71, 52, 54, 56–57, 66–67, 69
n. 25–26, 70 n. 27, 72–73 &
n. 32, 74, 76–77, 79, 80 n. 2,
85, 86 n. 15, 88–93 & n. 3, 94,
96–98, 100, 101 n. 17, 102–105,
107–111 & n. 9, 112–113 & n.
14, 114–115, 118 & n. 22, 120 &
n. 27, 125–127 & n. 45, 131, 133,
135 & n. 60, 137, 150–151 & n. 10,
153, 159, 165–166, 173–176, 179,
183, 185, 187–189, 191, 193–195,
197–199, 202 n. 7, 203, 205–207,
214, 219–220
- Simonides* 44 n. 58, 54, 165 n. 7, 192, 203
& n. 10
- Small Harbour* (of Syracuse) 13, 62, 132,
136, 160 n. 27
- Socrates* 184
- Solon* 10 n. 26, 46
- Solunto* 27 n. 25
- Sophocles* 85 & n. 13, 94, 96, 98, 103
- Sophrosyne* 167 & n. 16, 168, 170, 180,
182, 195–196

- Sparta (Spartans) 2–3, 10, 11 n. 31, 26,
28 & n. 27, 29, 32–33, 93, 98, 100,
112 & n. 13, 114–115, 124, 127,
131 & n. 53, 132–133, 135 n. 62,
147, 148 n. 2, 150–151, 157, 163 n.
1, 172, 179–180, 181 n. 38, 183, 215
- Sphacteria 98
- Speusippus 172
- Stasis 15 n. 37, 18, 23 n. 14, 53, 57, 59, 61,
63, 75, 78, 82, 87, 97, 108 & n. 5,
110, 116 n. 19, 140, 187–188, 193,
211
- Stephanus Byzantinus, *de thematibus* 1 n.2
- Strabo 3 & n. 12, 4–5 & n. 14, 16, 6–8 &
n. 20–21, 9, 11–12 & n. 32, 13,
16–17, 49, 67 n. 21, 69 n. 26,
70 & n. 28, 77 n. 35, 82 n. 5, 85,
187, 199, 201 n. 3, 205
- Strategos (strategoî)* 84 n. 11, 107 n. 3, 116,
117 n. 22, 124 & n. 38, 131, 139,
154 n. 14
- Strategos autocrator* 152, 178, 195
- Sulla 43 n. 57
- Syagrus 28
- Sybaris 6–7, 9–10 n. 26, 11–12, 16, 17, 27,
47 & n. 64, 49, 71 n. 30, 131 n. 53,
191, 199–200
- Synalus 174 n. 26
- Syraco 1 n. 2
- Syracuse *passim*; foundation, 1–18;
Deinomenid tyranny, 19–56;
fifth century collapse, 57–78;
democracy, 79–92; wars with
Athens, 93–106, 107–145; and
Dionysius I, 147–162; fourth
century collapse and Dion,
163–188
- Tarantines 50
- Taras 17, 50–51 & n. 71, 52, 114, 131–132,
191
- Tarquinius Priscus 11
- Tarquinius (Sextus) 166 n. 11
- Tauromenium 1 n. 2, 2 n. 4, 81 n. 4, 188 &
n. 57, 196
- Tegea 51
- Telephus 15 n. 37
- Telesides 178 n. 33
- Telines 23 & n. 15
- Tellias 131
- Temenos* 1 n. 1, 7, 22 n. 13, 42 n. 54, 122,
125, 129 & n. 48, 130, 133 n. 56,
157, 162, 209 n. 1, 211
- Tenea 7 & n. 18–19
- Terias River 69 n. 26, 118
- Terillus 33 & n. 38
- Terpander 11
- Thapsus 2, 62, 118–119 & n. 25, 128, 130,
142, 198
- Thearides 167 n. 18
- Themistocles 29, 36 n. 42, 41
- Theocritus 55 n. 77
- Theopompus 159 n. 24, 165 & n. 6
- Thermopylae 34, 38–41
- Theron 33–35 & n. 41, 36, 42 n. 50, 45
n. 60, 47–48 & n. 66, 56, 58, 70
n. 27, 202 & n. 7
- Thrasybulus 43 n. 55, 45 n. 60, 47, 48 n. 65,
54 & n. 74–75, 55–56, 58 & n. 4,
59 & n. 5–6, 60, & n. 7, 61–63 &
n. 13, 64–65, 69, 75–80, 84, 188,
192, 201–202 & n. 7, 206, 210, 212
- Thrasydaeus 35 n. 41, 47–49 & n. 68, 56,
58, 192
- Thucles 1, 198
- Thucydides (History) *passim*; relationship
with Hermocrates 3 n. 10, 101, 102
n. 19, 103 & n. 21, 110 n. 6, 113
n. 15, 116, 124 n. 37
- Thurii 3 n. 11, 19, 23, 110 n. 7, 120 n. 26,
124, 131 & n. 53, 164 & n. 5, 193,
195
- Timaeus 4 & n. 14, 11, 17, 19, 23 n. 16, 24,
33 n. 39, 37, 46, 57 n. 1, 60, 70 n.
29, 101 n. 18, 103 n. 21, 104 n. 22,
147, 149, 149 n. 3, 159 & n. 25,
161 n. 30, 165, 174, 184, 188
n. 56–57, 213–214 & n. 1,
216–217
- Timandra 183 n. 46

- Timocrates 176
 Timoleon 13, 76, 104 n. 22, 185 n. 51,
 187 & n. 53, 188 & n. 57, 189, 196
 Trinacria 90–91 & n. 24–25, 92, 193
 Trireme 27 & n. 26, 29 & n. 28, 30 n.
 29–30, 31 n. 36, 50 n. 70, 61, 78,
 85 & n. 14, 92, 94, 98 &
 n. 11, 99–100, 104, 107 n. 3, 109,
 112–113 & n. 14, 118–120 &
 n. 26, 123, 127, 131–132 &
 n. 54–55, 135–136 & n. 62,
 137–139 & n. 68, 140 n. 72, 142
 n. 77, 143 & n. 79, 81, 150 & n. 5,
 151 & n. 10, 159 n. 24, 160–161,
 163, 171 & n. 22, 176, 180, 216
 Troezen 29 n. 28
 Troigilus 129 n. 48
 Trojan War 14
 Trophy (*tropaion*) 50 n. 70, 100 & n. 15,
 128 n. 46, 214–217
 Troy 28 n. 27, 143 n. 82
 Tullus Hostilius 11
 Tyche 60–62 & n. 9, 64, 130 n. 49, 206
 Tyndarides 82–83, 193
 Tyranny 15 n. 37, 23 n. 16, 30, 31 n. 33,
 46, 48 n. 67, 55, 57–58, 60, 62–63,
 69–70, 77, 79, 84, 90, 104, 115,
 153, 161, 163, 165, 167, 169–170,
 173, 178, 183–184, 188 n. 57, 198,
 201, 205–212
 Tyrant 2, 6, 15 n. 37, 25, 28, 31, 38, 41, 44,
 46, 48 & n. 67, 51, & n. 72, 52–55 &
 n. 78, 59–63 & n. 13, 72, 74, 77
 n. 36, 79, 81 n. 4, 88, 92, 117, 147,
 152, 156–157, 161–163 & n. 1,
 164–165 & n. 9, 166–168 &
 n. 19, 169, 171–173, 176 & n. 28,
 178–179, 184 & n. 48, 185 & n. 51,
 186, 187 n. 53–54, 188–189, 192,
 198, 202, 205–206, 210, 219, 221
 Tyrrhenian Sea 49
 Tyrtaeus 11 & n. 30

 Velia (Elea) 10 49 n. 69
 Verres 9 n. 24
 Vibius Sequester 1 n. 2

 Xenocrates 56, 202 & n. 7
 Xenophon 154 n. 15, 184; *Hellenica*
 151 & n. 9
 Xerxes 2, 26, 31 & n. 34, 32–33 n. 39–40,
 34, 38, 40–41, 43, 52 n. 73, 57,
 114, 125

 Zacynthus 173–174, 182 & n. 43, 220
 Zancle (Messene) 12, 17, 20–21 & n. 8, 25,
 31 n. 33, 51, 55, 66–67, 74, 81
 n. 4, 191
 Zanclean 20 & n. 7
 Zephyrium (Capo Bruzzano) 8 & n. 21,
 12
 Zeus 24, 50 & n. 70; Zeus *Eleutherios* 63,
 206; Temple to Zeus at Polichne 1
 n. 2, 15, 19 & n. 3, 22 n. 13, 45
 n. 62, 122, 125 n. 41, 211 n. 3;
 Temple to Olympian Zeus at
 Acragas 42 n. 50; Temple of Zeus at
 Olympia 50 & n. 70